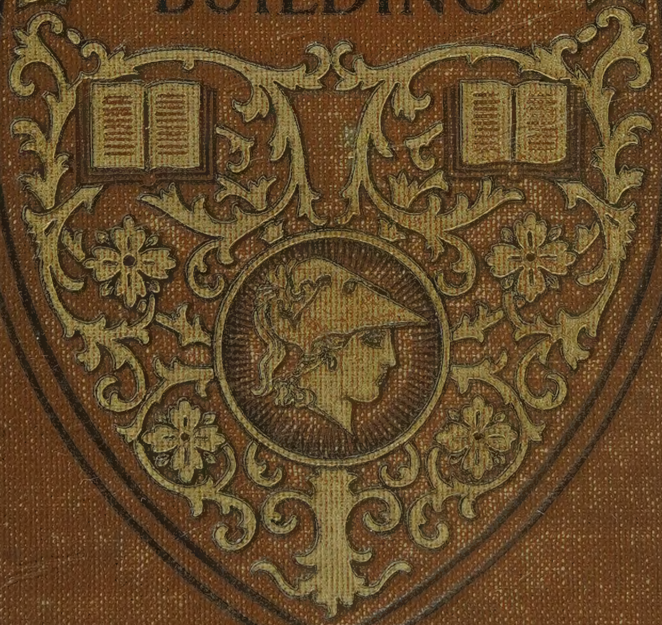
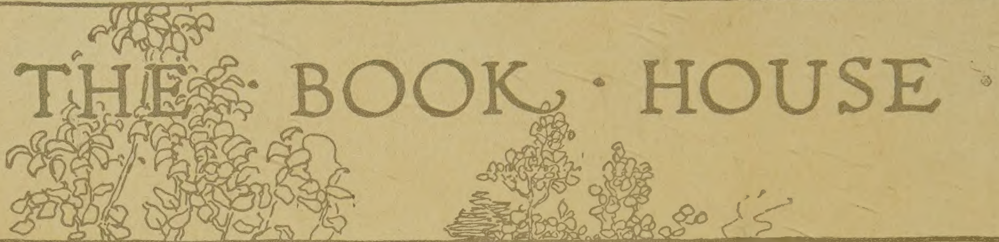
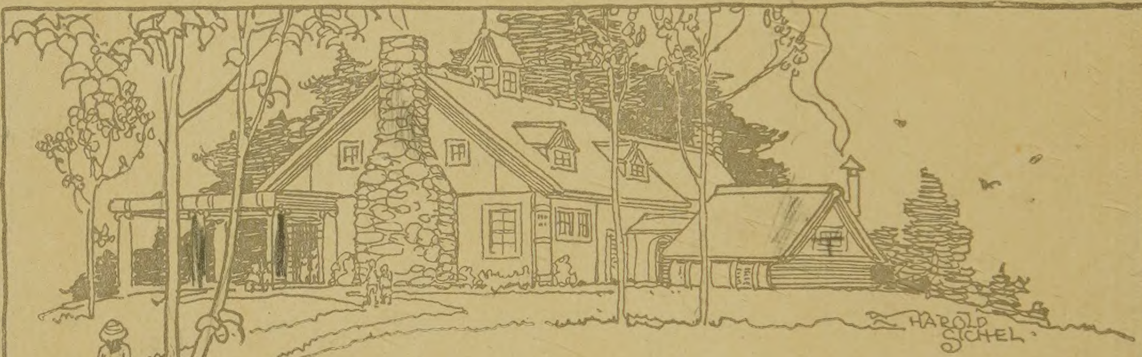
BIBLE STORIES AND CHARACTER BUILDING





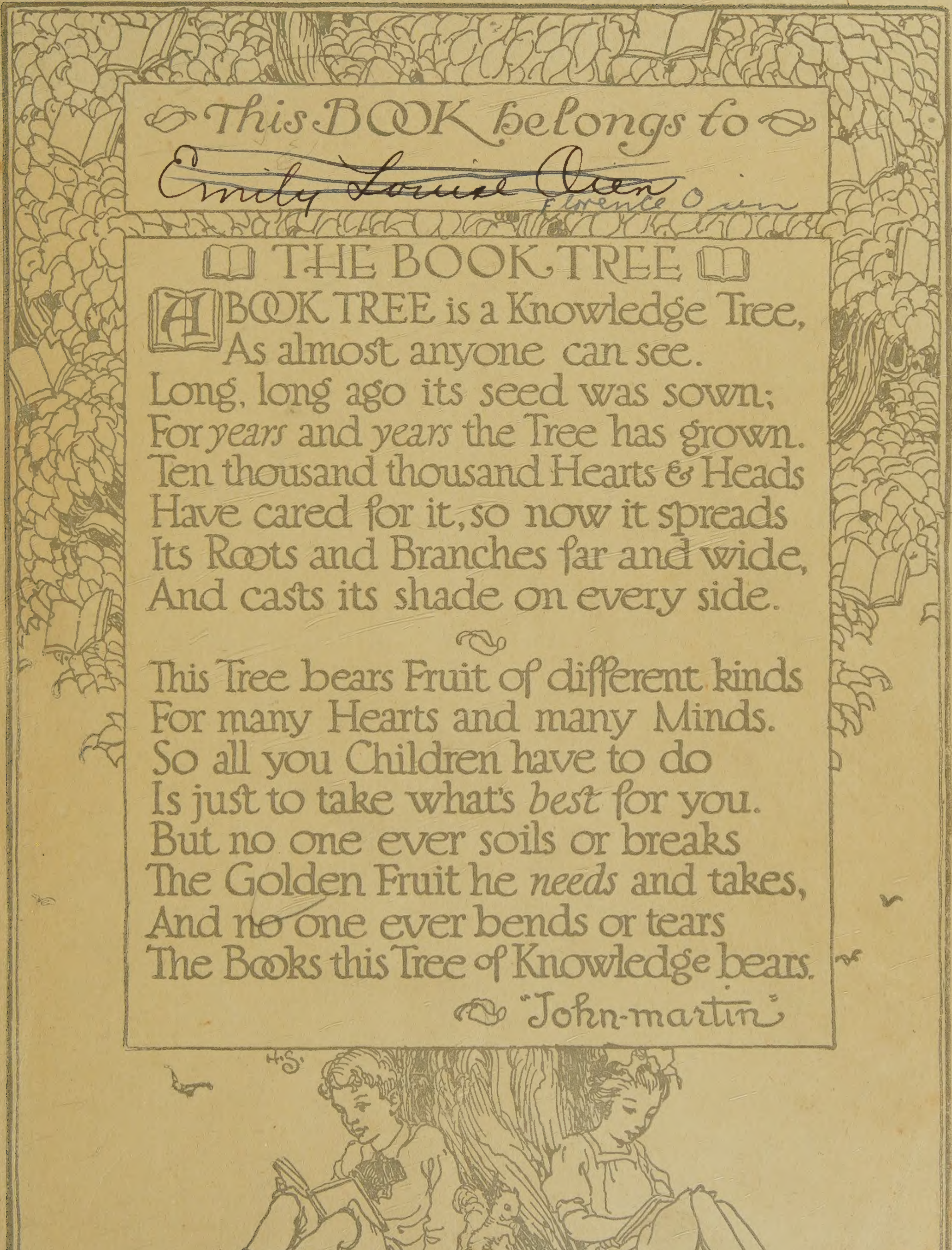
THE · BOOK · HOUSE



A BOOK is just a House of Thought,
Where many Things and People live.
Beyond its doors Great Things are taught,
And all its Dwellers give and give.
So walk right through the open door
With kindly Heart and brain awake.
You'll find in there a Wonder Store
Of Good Things, all for you to take.

The Dwellers in *your* Book House know
All sorts of tales to tell to you,
And each will try his best to show
The way those tales of Wonder grew.
For this our Book House Friends expect
A trifling payment in return;
Just thoughtful Kindness and Respect,—
That's all they *ask* for all we *learn*.

John-martin



This BOOK belongs to

~~Emily Louise Owen~~ Florence Owen

THE BOOK TREE

A BOOK TREE is a Knowledge Tree,
As almost anyone can see.
Long, long ago its seed was sown;
For *years* and *years* the Tree has grown.
Ten thousand thousand Hearts & Heads
Have cared for it, so now it spreads
Its Roots and Branches far and wide,
And casts its shade on every side.

* * *

This Tree bears Fruit of different kinds
For many Hearts and many Minds.
So all you Children have to do
Is just to take what's *best* for you.
But no one ever soils or breaks
The Golden Fruit he *needs* and takes,
And no one ever bends or tears
The Books this Tree of Knowledge bears.

"John-martin"

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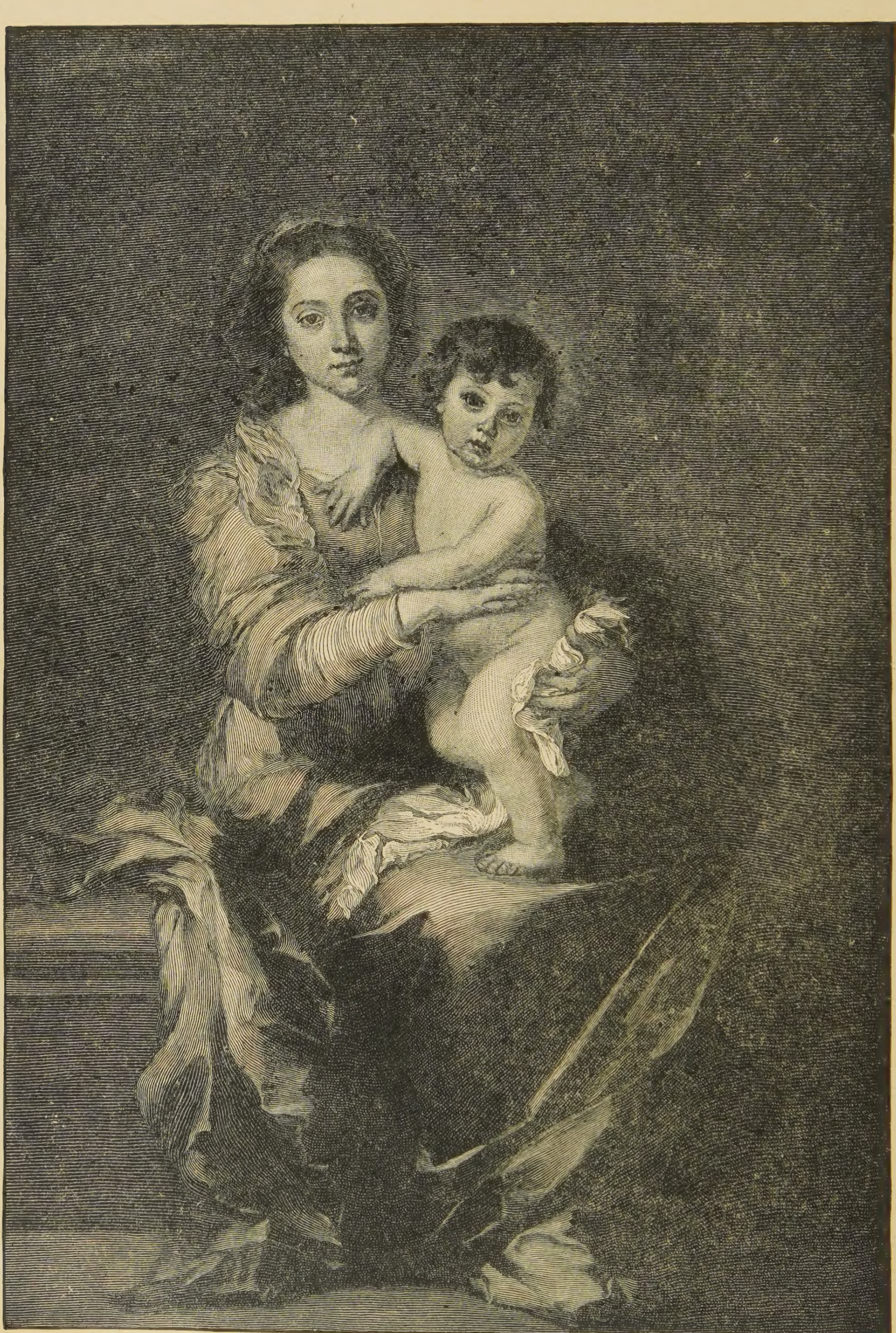

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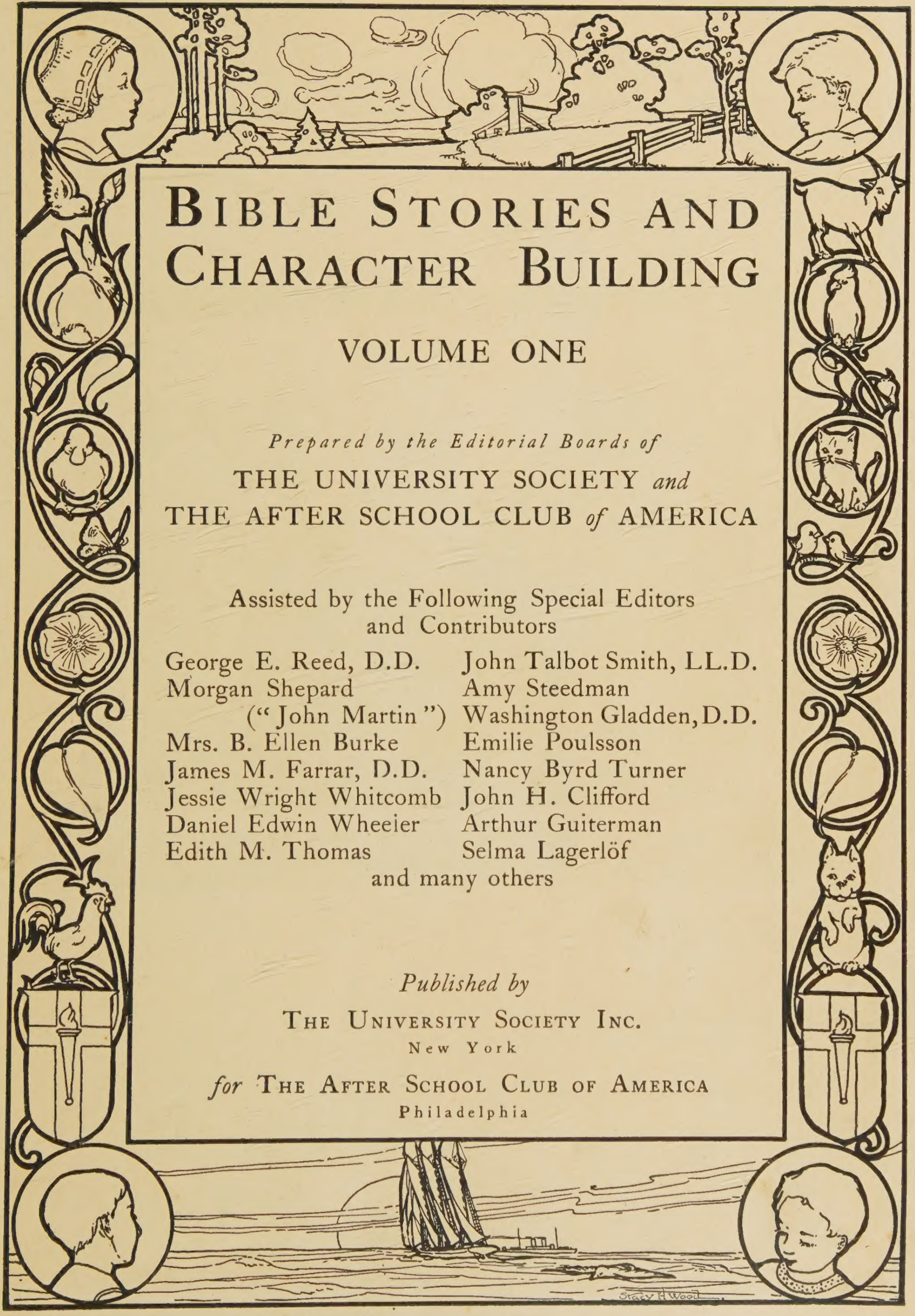

BIBLE STORIES AND CHARACTER BUILDING

VOLUME ONE

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A FOREWORD.

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS:

When you read this book, try to think of it as a Friend,—your *true Friend,* for every thought in it is made plain in print for you. Every white page bound into its covers is *yours.* Yes, this book is made *just for you.* Take it, keep it, treasure it, for it is a Friend whose heart is full of Love, Good Wishes and Sure Help.

In making Your Book, we felt certain that you were not the kind of Children that wanted to be amused or entertained all the time. You *will* be entertained by this Book-Friend, but you will also be helped and guided to higher Manhood and truer Womanhood by its straight Truths—Godly and Goodly Truths.

Boys, we want your Boyhood to be a firm foundation for noble *Manhood.* You are "worth-while" Boys and you want to be brave, honest and successful MEN.

Girls, you are true-hearted, and you hope some day to be kind, bright, gentle and wise WOMEN. You wish to be full of the sort of beauty that makes you loved and admired, no matter what your place in life may be.

Boys and Girls, you wish all this, don't you? Well, this Book of yours will show you how to be what you wish to be. We call Your Book "BIBLE STORIES AND CHARACTER-BUILDING." It tells you the very best stories from the very best Book the world knows, the BIBLE. The golden pages of this Good

Book have made many a splendid HERO and HEROINE. The days of True Heroism are not over. You all have the same kind of hearts that God gave to His Boys and Girls in the Olden Days you read of. We believe that, if need be, you may be just as true Heroes and Heroines as any of those of the Bible or of History.

As you read these words, you may say, "Why, this is a Religious Book!" So it is, Children, but it is not a "goody-goody" Book. As I have said, it is just *straight* TRUTH, which Children like you want to know. It shows you the manliness and nobility of GOODNESS. It points out the real bigness and fineness of Religion. *Best of all*, it shows you what a true CHRISTIAN is. There is a world of greatness in the word "Christian," and I cannot begin to tell of it all, but I will say two things about a Christian.

FIRST. No Boy can be a Christian who is not a *fighter*, but he must "fight a *good* fight." He must fight for the *right* which his conscience shows him. Against all odds he must *battle* without tiring against his hidden enemy, EVIL, and his brutal enemy, WRONG. Yes, Boys, you *know* this is true bravery, and it takes a *fighter* to win out with honor.

SECOND. A Christian Boy or Girl must know how to PRAY. In all our hearts, no matter if we are old or young, the Voice of God is in us, bidding us to *pray*. Prayers are only WISHES, after all—just wishes for our own GOOD. Prayers are only longings or desires for certain things that make us happier and better. We all WISH, and we all should try to make our wishes into Prayers, and so help them to come true.

So, Children, this book of "BIBLE STORIES

AND CHARACTER-BUILDING" gives you page after page of Wish-prayers. You will turn to them to help you put your Wishes into simple words. You will get great Good from these pages.

As for "amusement," which every Child wants and has a right to, you will find treasure pages full of this. There are Christmas Days; there is Santa Claus, and all the joy of these good times. There are Many Happy New Years awaiting you, full of promise and the best of Fortune. Yes, you will find "entertainment" in this Book of yours.

Finally, Children, I want to say that, in giving this book to *you*, we give *ourselves* the truest kind of happiness. We are reaching out our older and more experienced hands to you like good Comrades. You will grasp our guiding hands and grow stronger and wiser. As for *us*, we will grow *younger* and *better*, too, for your presence. So, Children, God speed your Journey into Good Life! Good bye!

Always your true Friend,

JOHN MARTIN.

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From the painting by Bernhard Plockhorst.

"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME."

"I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he called little children as lambs to his fold,
I should like to have been with him then."

THE CHILD'S FRIEND.

THE TRIBUTE-MONEY (TITIAN).

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN (GABRIEL MAX).

THESE PICTURES SHOW HOW THREE DIFFERENT PAINTERS THOUGHT CHRIST LOOKED. TWO OF THEM ARE OF FAMILIAR SCENES IN HIS LIFE—HIS REPLY TO THE PEOPLE WHO ASKED HIM ABOUT THE ROMAN PENNY (Luke xx. 22-25); AND THE RAISING OF THE RULER'S LITTLE DAUGHTER.

Painted by Gabriel Max.

Painted by Gabriel Max.

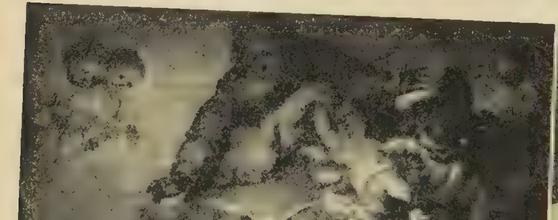
Painted by Guido Reni.

Painted by F. Goodall.

MARY, THE MOTHER OF CHRIST.

MADONNA (BODENHAUSEN).

MADONNA (ZICK).



THE HOLY FAMILY (MURILLO).

THE SISTINE MADONNA (RAPHAEL).

MARY, THE MOTHER OF CHRIST.

VERY MANY GREAT PAINTERS, BOTH IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND TO-DAY, HAVE TRIED TO MAKE FOR US BEAUTIFUL PICTURES OF THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

PRAYERS THAT EVERY CHILD SHOULD LEARN

FOR A PURE HEART

Jesus, take this heart of mine,
Make it pure, and only thine.
I thy little child would be,
Help me, Lord, to live for thee.

FOR THREE THINGS

Dear Lord, for these three things I pray:
To know thee more clearly,
To love thee more dearly,
To follow thee more nearly,
Every day.

FOR EVERY DAY

Father, we thank thee for the night,
And for the pleasant morning light;
For rest and food and loving care,
And all that makes the day so fair.

Help us to do the things we should,
To be to others kind and good;
In all we do in work or play,
To grow more loving every day.

GIVING THANKS FOR THE SAVIOUR

For Jesus Christ, the children's friend,
We thank thee, heavenly Father;
For Jesus Christ, who keeps us to the end
We thank thee, heavenly Father.

THANKS FOR GOD'S GOODNESS

Dear Lord, we thank thee for thy care,
And all thy mercy sends;
For food we eat, the clothes we wear,
Our health and home and friends.

JESUS, SAVIOUR, PILOT ME

Jesus, Saviour, pilot me,
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal;
Chart and compass come from thee:
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
Boisterous waves obey thy will
When thou say'st to them "Be still!"
Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

When at last I near the shore,
And the fearful breakers roar
'Twixt me and the peaceful rest,
Then, while leaning on thy breast,
May I hear thee say to me,
"Fear not, I will pilot thee!"

LEAD ME ON

Traveling to the better land,
O'er the desert's scorching sand,
Father! let me grasp thy hand;
Lead me on, lead me on!

When at Marah, parched with heat,
I the sparkling fountain greet,
Make the bitter water sweet;
Lead me on!

When the wilderness is drear,
Show me Elim's palm-grove near,
And her wells, as crystal clear;
Lead me on!

Through the water, through the fire,
Never let me fall or tire,
Every step brings Canaan nigher:
Lead me on!

Bid me stand on Nebo's height,
Gaze upon the land of light,
Then, transported with the sight,
Lead me on!

When I stand on Jordan's brink,
Never let me fear or shrink;
Hold me, Father, lest I sink:
Lead me on!

When the victory is won,
And eternal life begun,
Up to glory lead me on!
Lead me on, lead me on!

PRAYERS IN VERSE FOR LITTLE CHILDREN

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
We hallow thy name!
May thy kingdom holy
On earth be the same.

O, give to us daily
Our portion of bread;
It is from thy bounty
That all must be fed.

Forgive our transgressions,
And teach us to know
That humble compassion
That pardons each foe.

Keep us from temptation,
From weakness and sin,
And thine be the glory
Forever—Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

Now the shades of night are gone;
Now the morning light is come;
Lord, may I be thine to-day;
Drive the shades of sin away.

Fill my soul with heavenly light,
Banish doubt, and clear my sight;
In thy service, Lord, to-day,
May I labor, watch, and pray.

ANOTHER

I thank thee, Lord, for quiet rest,
And for thy care of me;
Oh, let me through this day be blest,
And kept from harm by thee.
Oh, let me thank thee, kind thou art
To children such as I,
Give me a gentle, loving heart;
Be thou my friend on high.

ANOTHER

Father in heaven, help thy little children
To love and serve thee throughout this day.
Help us to be truthful, help us to be kindly,
That we may please thee in all we do or say.

Dear Lord, we pray thee, keep thy little children
From doing wrong throughout this happy day.
Hear our morning promises. Father, help us keep them,
That we may please thee in all we do or say.

EVENING PRAYER

Glory to thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light;
Keep me, O keep me, King of kings,
Under thine own almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
The ills that I this day have done;
That with the world, myself, and thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

ANOTHER

Lord, teach a little child to pray,
And fill my heart with love,
And make me fitter, every day,
To go to heaven above.

O, hear my little simple prayer,
My faults and sins forgive,
That I may join the angels there,
And with my Saviour live.

AT BEDTIME

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

THE CHILD'S PRAYER

Lord, teach a little child to pray,
And then accept my prayer;
For thou canst hear the words I say,
For thou art everywhere.

A little sparrow cannot fall
Unnoticed, Lord, by thee;
And though I am so young and small,
Thou dost take care of me.

Teach me to do the thing that 's right,
And when I sin, forgive;
And make it still my chief delight
To serve thee while I live.

A SUMMER SUNDAY HOUR OF LONG AGO.

LITTLE SERMONS FOR LITTLE FOLK

THE WONDERFUL RING

"Being convicted by conscience."—*John* viii. 9

A SILVER egg was once, as the story goes, presented to a prince. On opening the shell by a spring, he found within a yolk of gold. Another spring caused the yolk to open and disclose a beautiful bird. By pressing the wings of the bird, the breast opened and displayed a wonderful ring. The ring fitted the prince's finger excellently while he walked in the right path, but pinched his flesh sharply whenever he was in danger of doing wrong. This wonderful ring illustrates what your conscience does for you.

The story of the ring tells you, however, a part only of the meaning of conscience. Conscience tells you to do what you know to be right and not to do what you know to be wrong. It does not and can not tell you what is right and what is wrong. The Bible tells us about right and wrong. You must read your Bible, learn what it says is right and what it says is wrong. When you have the knowledge in your heart then conscience will whisper: "Do what you believe is right, do not do what you believe is wrong." If you obey conscience you are happy, but if you disobey conscience you are unhappy. Two facts I want you boys and girls to clearly fix in your minds, are these: First—learn from the Bible what God says is right and what he says is wrong. Second—listen to the still small voice of conscience telling you to obey God.

An incident in the childhood of Theodore Parker will help you to understand what I am so anxious for you to remember. Here is the story:

One fine day in the spring, when Theodore was a little boy, his father took him to a field, where he was working, and later sent him home again. On the way back the boy had to pass a "pond-hole," wherein he saw, in full bloom, a beautiful rhodora. In trying to get at the flower he saw a pretty little spotted tortoise, sunning itself in the shallow water.

He lifted the stick he held in his hand and was about to strike the harmless creature, but all at once something checked the uplifted arm, and a voice within said, clear and strong, "It is wrong."

He held the uplifted stick in wonder at the new emotion, and the tortoise vanished from his sight.

Hastening home, he related the case to his mother, and asked her what it was that told him it was wrong to strike the tortoise.

Wiping the tear from her eye with her apron, and taking the boy in her arms, the mother said to him:

"Some men call it conscience, but I prefer to call it the voice of God in the soul of man. If you will listen and obey it, then it will speak clearer and clearer, and always guide you right; but if you turn a deaf ear or disobey, then it will fade away little by little and leave you all in the dark without a guide. Your life, my son, depends on heeding this little voice."

From "Harper's Magazine" I take a story that will show you the power and blessing of a good conscience:

"The widow of an English army officer was visiting me with her son, a charming little fellow about five years old. The mother told me with pride how honorable he was, how high-minded, and that she had never for an instant seen in him indications of any traits that were low or base.

"The child was put to bed at six. We dined at seven. I was sitting in the drawing-room one evening before dinner. The room was dark, the doors open, and my seat commanded a view of both the stairway and the dining-room. The table was set, and in the center was a dish of tempting peaches.

"Presently there came to my ears the patter of little bare feet, and a childish figure, clad in a nightgown, stole down the stairs, through the hall, into the dining-room, up to the table. Small fingers seized the topmost peach from the dish, and the little fellow turned and trotted away upstairs again.

"As I sat in the dark, in an agony of apprehension, there came again the patter, patter of little feet, and a white-clad figure stole down the stairs, through the hall, into the dining-room, up to the table. Small fingers replaced the stolen peach just where it had been, and a stubborn little voice muttered, 'Done again, old Satan!'"

He was "convicted by conscience" and obeyed the voice of God.

ROSES OF CHARITY

"I am the rose of Sharon."—*Song of Solomon* ii. 1

THE rose is a great linguist. It can speak in every language in the world. It makes no difference where the rose is when it speaks—the people understand what it says and love it. How does it speak? It speaks by its beauty and its fragrance. If you should take a bunch of roses and go down to the pier where the immigrants come into the city of New York from Ellis Island, and if you should give the first little immigrant girl that you met one of your roses, you would see her eyes light up and a smile come to her face. She would know what the rose said, and would realize that its message was one of love and good will from you. Christ like a rose comes with a message of love and good will to all.

Solomon represented Christ as saying: "I am the rose of Sharon." When Christ was upon earth he said: "I am the vine. Ye are the branches."

If, then, we are one with Christ as a branch is one with the vine, there will be roses not only on our cheeks, but they will drop from our hands in our every act of love and kindness. Christ is the bread of life, and we often need him as our bread; but there is a hunger for beauty and fragrance that bread does not satisfy. As the rose of Sharon, he meets this need of your life and mine. Luther Burbank, who lives in California, hunts until he finds a strong vine, upon which he grafts a branch of some favorite rose. It has been said that he has produced a flower that will never fade. He found a hardy annual, upon which he grafted a branch which bears fragrant blossoms that never lose their color. If you are one with Christ, and he is living in you, then your acts of kindness will be like fadeless roses.

The rose is a flower that blooms in every part of the world. China has the climbing white rose; Persia boasts of a hundred-leaved variety. From Egypt's sands the rose grows and blooms, and Iceland produces a vivid crimson rose, which the natives find as they scrape away the snow to gather moss for their reindeer. Christ, the vine, will live in any part of the world, and upon this vine we can graft the rose of China, Egypt, Iceland, and of every land, a variety of roses with a unity in the vine—the snow-rose of Iceland and the American Beauty rose, roses of all varieties, but all one in the unity of the vine.

A motherless child in a poor home was very sick. All winter she lay in the sick-room, and visitors seldom came to see her. The wind made a lonely sound in the limbs of the leafless trees. The child longed for a bird, and the first to come was an owl. After a long wait June came and opened the window, covered the trees with leaves and brought singing birds. One morning when the child awoke there was a visitor in the room—a green vine with a red rose. The vine, fastened to the wall, had, from the weight of the dew, fallen through the open window on to the invalid's pillow. The child pressed the cool red rose against her pale hot cheek, and smiled for the first time in weeks.

If you are a branch of the Christ vine, you will find the open window, and, as the rose of sympathy, love and helpfulness, you will shed forth beauty and fragrance wherever they are most needed. The dew of heaven will fall upon you, and the fragrance and beauty of your life will help to make earth like heaven.

PLAYING TO MUSIC

"We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced."—*Matt.* xi. 17

THE boy or girl who will not dance is a dunce. I mean the kind of dance that Christ watched and enjoyed, when the children were playing on the streets of Jerusalem. Christ speaks of two street-games—one was funeral, and the other was wedding. Children then, like children now, imitated the older people. At a real funeral the mourners played on reed-pipes, something like our flute.

When the sad and doleful music was heard, the people would lament. Lament means to cry and moan. The children would imitate the funeral —they played funeral. Sometimes when a trifle contrary they refused to play. "We have moaned unto you," the other children said, "and ye have not lamented."

Their other game gave no excuse for refusing to play. It was the game of wedding. The same pipe or flute was used, and they played the same tune, but they played it a little faster. There were some cross-grained children who would not play wedding. I think that they were the ones who were not asked to play bride and groom. Then those who were playing would say, "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced." Christ watched these children when they played, as truly as he watched them when they prayed. What a beautiful picture! Children on the street dancing to music and shouting to one another in great glee, Christ watching them and rejoicing with them. When I was a boy the minister preached about Christ listening when I prayed. How I wish he had told me that Christ watched me when I played. How much better I would have played.

The children Christ was watching were not dancing in the way we mean by dancing. They were playing to music. In the army they have music to help the soldiers march. Why not have music to help the children play? It is better to have music while you exercise than it is to have music while you eat. You can eat fast enough and long enough without music. I wish we could have a band of music on every playground. When music gets into your ears it runs down into your feet and makes you dance. You ought to dance. Dancing in the open air is fine exercise. God put dance into your feet to make you grow. I am always glad when I hear the street-band and see the children dancing. I once heard of some one who counted the steps taken by dancers. As many as 56,000 steps are often taken by the children. That is three miles longer than the Marathon race. The children's street-dance is the easiest and best way of exercise.

There are two things I want you to remember. The first is that Christ watches you not only when you pray, but he watches you when you play. Christ was interested in me when, as a boy, I danced along the streets of the little village of Candor. He is interested in you as you dance along the streets of your village or city. Is n't it splendid to know that Christ enjoys your play? The second thing to remember is that you have no more right to be cranky and cross-grained when you play than you have to be cranky and cross-grained when you pray. God watches while you play and listens while you pray.

The Bible says there is "a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance." A time to dance—that means that we are not to dance all the time. When the dancing-time is up, you should stop and be ready to do something else. You ought to work and pray as heartily and cheerfully as you dance and play. The dance habit, wanting to dance all the time, is a very bad habit. Dance and play in order to grow strong and happy. Get strong and happy in order that you may do great things for God and man. There are battles to be fought in life that can not be won by those who know only how to dance.

May I tell you a story? The Sybarites were great warriors. At one time they sent out 300,000 men to fight their enemies. They had fine horses, and being very proud of them, taught them to dance. The horses would rise on their hind feet and then on their fore feet, as they kept time to the music. For more than a year the soldiers had nothing to do, so they exercised their horses by having them dance. The horses got into the dancing habit. Then came a great war, and the soldiers rode out to the battlefield expecting to gain a victory.

The enemy were on foot and the horsemen expected to ride right over them, and to defeat them easily. The enemy knew the horses had the dancing habit. They knew the horses' dance-music. So when the horsemen came rushing at them, the enemy began to play dance-music. The horses forgot it was war and began to dance. What a sight! Warriors eager for battle, sitting on dancing horses. The horses danced, rising on their hind feet and then on their fore feet, turning to right, then turning to left, forward and backward and balanced all. While the horses danced, the enemy fought, and the brave horsemen were easily conquered. The battle was lost because the war-horses had the dance habit. Let us make a resolution to-day to play and pray, to work and never shirk. Christ came to set our life to music.

THE MAGIC DIPPER

"I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink."—*Matt.* xxv. 35

HANG your dipper on the sky. In the country the dipper, or tin cup, hangs on the side of the pump. To-day you are to listen to the story of a dipper that hangs on the sky. There are several stars in the northern heavens so situated as to look like a long-handled dipper. Get some one to help you to find them and to show you how much they really look like a dipper. The two stars forming the further edge of the bowl are called "the pointers," as they point up to the north star. This is the star to which we hitch our ships when crossing the ocean.

There is a story or legend which pretends to tell how these seven bright stars came to form the dipper. Once in a country far away the people were dying of thirst. There had been no rain for months. The rivers and springs and brooks had all dried up. The plants and flowers had withered and died. The birds were so hoarse that they could not sing, and the whole land was sad and mournful.

One night a little girl crept out of her house with a tin dipper in her hand and passed quietly into a wood near by. Kneeling down under a tree, she folded her hands and prayed that God would send rain, if it were only enough to fill her little dipper. She prayed so long that at last she fell asleep. When she awoke she was overjoyed to find her dipper full of clear, cool water.

Remembering that her mother was dying of thirst, she did not even wait to moisten her own parched lips, but, taking her dipper, she hurried home. In her haste she stumbled, and, alas! dropped her dipper. Just then she felt something move in the grass beside her. It was a little dog that had almost fainted for want of water.

She picked up the fallen dipper and, to her great surprise, found that not a drop of its precious contents had been spilled. Pouring out a few drops of water into her hand, she held it out for the dog to lap up. He did so, and seemed much revived. But as she had poured out the water the tin dipper had been changed into a beautiful silver dipper. Rushing to her home, she gave the dipper to her mother.

"Oh!" cried her mother, "I will not take it. I shall not live anyway. You must drink it. You are younger and stronger than I."

As she gave the dipper back untouched it changed to shining gold! She was just about to give each person in the household a spoonful, when she saw a stranger at the door. He looked sad and weary, and she handed him the dipper. He took it saying: "Blessed is he who gives a cup of cold water in his name."

A radiance shone all about him, and immediately the golden dipper became studded with seven sparkling diamonds. Then it burst forth into a fountain which supplied the thirsty land with water.

The seven diamonds rose into the air. Higher and higher they ascended, until at last they reached the sky, and there they changed into the seven bright stars which form the Great Dipper.

A legend only, but in it there is a lesson—a lesson from the study of astronomy. The story teaches us the value of unselfish service.

THE LAND OF FORGET

"The land of forgetfulness."—*Psalm* lxxxviii. 12

THE train starts early every morning. There are several trains a day for the Land of Forget. Children are on every train. Sometimes they come back on the switch-train. We are all tourists and every one takes a trip to the Land of Forget. Many things are left on the train as we journey to this strange land. Guess how many articles are left in one year in the London cabs by passengers on their way to the Land of Forget. Can't guess? Then I shall tell you, as I have the report: 19,000 umbrellas, 850 canes, 267 rugs, 742 opera-glasses, 3,239 purses, 926 articles of jewelry, and a number of birds, dogs and cats. All on their way to the Land of Forget. Some foolish and funny things are done in the Land of Forget. Here is one:

A French writer, engaged upon a profound scientific work, rang for his valet. He then sat down and wrote this note: "Kindly send some one to arrest the cook. She has stolen my purse." This he directed to the chief of police. The valet appeared, and, while waiting for his master to finish writing, picked up something lying under the table. As he took the note, he said, "Monsieur, here is your purse; I found it under the table."

"Ah, just in time; give me the note, Jean."

He hurriedly added the postscript: "I have found my purse; it is unnecessary to send any one," and handed the missive to the valet, saying, "Deliver this at once; it is important." He then went back to his writing.

There are too many trains and cabs to the Land of Forget. I say too many; but there should be one, at least, each day. There are some things we should take to the Land of Forget. God made this land, and it has room for many things we should not find room for here. Learn this verse before you take the morning train. Do not forget!

"If you know of a thing that will darken the joy
Of a man or a woman, a girl or a boy,
That will wipe out a smile, or the least way annoy
A fellow, or cause any gladness to cloy,
It 's a pretty good plan to forget it."

But how many things there are that we should not forget. Fathers, mothers, and friends are very much troubled by the children's forget. "I forgot!" "I did not think!" I fear some children take too many trips to the Land of Forget. There must be a hole in the corner of your memory. What a strange hole it is. If you have "a date" for a party or a day off with a friend it never falls out through that hole. If a visit is promised you, it would not fall out even if the hole were as large as the pocket. But the letter to be posted, the errand to be run, or something for mamma as big as a barn-door, will drop out through the hole. I know a boy who said, "I fordegot." I once read a story a Mr. Roach wrote on how to cure the "fordegot."

"Did my son post that letter I gave him yesterday?" asked Ned's mamma.

Ned's hand dived into the inside pocket of his coat and brought out a crumpled letter.

"I'm so sorry, mamma!" he cried, seeing the grieved look on his mamma's face.

"I, too, am sorry," responded mamma, "as that was a letter inviting Aunt Amy to stop off here on her way home."

"Oh! oh!" cried Ned. "And I do so love Aunt Amy!"

"If you catch this mail the letter may yet be in time," said mamma.

Ned ran off as fast as he could to post the precious letter.

Another day it was a school-book which he left out in the orchard. It rained all night and ruined his book. Ned tried to remember, but always forgot. One day Uncle Charlie heard Ned say to his mamma, "Plague take my forgettery!" Uncle Charlie knew that Ned had been forgetting again, and he thought of a plan to cure Ned of his habit.

"Ned will be eight years old Saturday," said mamma that day at tea-time.

"Can I have a party with both boys and girls, and plum-cakes and candles?" cried Ned.

"Of course you can," said Uncle Charlie. "I'll buy the candles—eight and one to grow on."

"I'll bake the plum-cake," said mamma.

"I'll write the invitations," said sister Nell.

"I'll make a heaping platter of fudge," laughed Aunt Amy, who, after all, had gotten the delayed letter in time.

"And I," said papa, "will send up some ice-cream."

Ned danced for joy, and ran off to school with a hop, skip, and jump. Saturday morning Ned's mamma sent him ever so far to Mr. Benton's, who raised vegetables and chickens to sell. Try as he would, Ned could not get home until just dinner-time; but he told Mr. Benton all about his party, and Mr. Benton gave him a cute little bantam chicken for his birthday present.

"Do you think," asked Ned at dinner, "my party will come right at two o'clock?"

"Well, well," said Uncle Charlie, "I forgot all about those candles!"

"I've been so busy," said Aunt Amy, "that I forgot to make the fudge!"

"And I," said papa, "forgot to order the ice-cream. It is too bad!"

"It does n't matter at all," said sister Nell, "for I forgot to invite any one to the party."

Ned's face grew longer and longer, and he looked at his mamma, who had not spoken yet. Surely she had not forgotten!

"Why," laughed Uncle Charlie before mamma could speak, "it'll be a forget party, won't it?"

This was too much. Ned burst into tears and ran up to his own little room. After what seemed a long, long time to Ned and to Ned's mamma, too, she stole up-stairs with a great big piece of plum-cake, for, try as she would, mamma could not forget her little boy's birthday.

After that, when Ned forgot, which he seldom did, some one would say, "I guess we would better have another forget party."

Solomon was a very, very wise man, and he said: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments." Now, I believe we have the real cure for "fordegot." Put the things you are to remember in your heart as well as in your brain. There is no hole in the pocket of your heart.

A STONE IN THE ROAD

"Take ye away the stone."—*John* xi. 39

Christ used these words of a stone at the door of a tomb. I want to speak of another kind of stone which should also be taken away. A stone in the middle of the road. You will see what I mean if you listen.

The Roman year began with March; September was the seventh month. They took the name from the Latin *septem,* meaning seven. It was their seventh month, but is our ninth. Some of you boys and girls are wishing it were now the seventh month, as the seventh month is the beginning of vacation. The ninth month is the beginning of school work. September is probably the most difficult month of your school year. A difficult vocation after a delightful vacation. You say, "Why must we master all of these difficult lessons? Why can not our school life be made a little easier for us? I am sure I shall never need these miserable lessons when I grow up." The answer to your questions is, that every difficulty you meet and conquer makes you stronger. The pathway of life has many difficulties, some of them in the very middle of the path. These are the stones in the middle of the road. School work is teaching you how to roll away the difficulties you will meet. Every lesson you fail to conquer will make the next one more difficult. A story will teach you the lesson and help you to understand September school work.

A long time ago there lived a king who took great delight in teaching his people good habits. "Bad luck comes only to the lazy and the careless," he would say; "but to the busy workers God gives the good things of this life."

He put a large stone in the middle of the road near his palace one night, and set himself to watch to see what the people passing that way would do. Early in the morning a sturdy old farmer came along, with his heavy ox-cart loaded with corn. "Oh, these lazy people!" he cried, driving his oxen to one side of the road. "Here is this big stone right in the middle of the road, and nobody has taken the trouble to remove it." He went on his way, scolding about the laziness of other people, but never thinking of touching the stone himself.

Next came a young soldier, singing a merry song as he walked along. A gay feather was stuck in his hat and a big sword hung at his side. He held his head so high that he did not see the stone, and, stumbling over it, he fell flat in the dust. He got to his feet and began to storm at the country people. "Silly drones!" he cried, "think of their having no more sense than to leave a stone like that in the middle of the road." Then he passed on, but he did not sing any more.

Six merchants, with their goods on packhorses, came down the road an hour later, bound for the fair which was to be held near the village. When they reached the stone, they found that the road was so narrow that they could hardly drive their horses between it and the wall. "Did any one ever see the like?" they demanded. "There is that big stone in the road, and not a man in all the country but is too lazy to move it."

So the stone lay there for three weeks. It was in everybody's way, and yet everybody left it for somebody else to remove. Finally, the king sent word to all his people to meet together near his palace on a certain day, as he had something to tell them. When the day for the meeting came, a great crowd of men and women gathered in the road. The old farmer was there, and so were the merchants and the young soldier. "I hope the king will find out what a lazy set of people he has around him," remarked the farmer.

The sound of the horn was soon heard, and the king was to be seen coming toward them. He rode up to the stone, dismounted from his horse, and said: "My friends, I was the one who put this stone here more than three weeks ago. Every one of you has seen it, and yet every one has left it just where it was and has scolded his neighbor for not moving it out of his way."

Then he stooped down and rolled the stone over. Beneath it was a small iron box in a hole scooped in the road-bed. The king held up the box so that all the people might see what was written on a piece of paper which was attached to it. These were the words: "For him who lifts the stone." The king opened the box and turned it upside down. As he did so, a beautiful gold ring and twenty bright gold coins fell jingling to the ground.

The best things of this world and the best gifts of the next are to be found under the difficulties which we roll away. "Take ye away the stone."

THE CAREFUL BOY

"There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes."—*John* vi. 9

WHAT a pleasant thing it is to know a bright-witted, careful boy! So many boys think it just right to be heedless, to have no order in their dress, their room, their daily life, to be sloppy and careless at all times. Now here is the story of a boy whose name is not known, and perhaps never will be, but who won everlasting fame and a place in the beautiful Gospel of Christ, because of his careful disposition. In the days when our Lord Jesus lived on earth, he went about preaching and teaching and healing in Judea, and his great name attracted thousands of people. They followed him about from one place to another, to hear his beautiful teaching, to receive his advice, to get his aid for the sick, the blind, the deaf, the insane, the dying, and even the dead. He cured the sick and often raised the dead to life again.

On one occasion five thousand men followed him far from the cities into a deserted place. They were so far from any town where bread could be bought, that there was danger of some suffering from starvation. In their joy at following Jesus many had neglected to provide themselves with sufficient food. Jesus therefore said to Philip: "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to try him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes: but what are these among so many?"

Five small loaves of barley bread, about the size of our breakfast rolls, and two dried fishes, was certainly a small amount upon which to feed five thousand men. But the Lord Jesus knew what he would do. He asked the boy for his bread and fish, blessed the food, and sent the disciples and others around to divide it among the five thousand men. And as they went, behold the five loaves and the two fishes kept on increasing in quantity, until the five thousand men had eaten all they were able to hold. Then our Lord ordered the men to gather up the remnants, and they filled twelve good-sized baskets with bread and fish; so that they had still enough to keep them from hunger on their march back to the towns. "Now those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world. Jesus therefore, when he knew that they would come to take him by force, and make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone."

The men could not find our Lord, so they had to march back home, telling everywhere the story of the miracle; and of course they must have praised to the skies that boy who owned the five barley loaves and the two fishes. What became of him? Who was he? There is no answer to these questions, but it is easy enough with a little thinking to discover just what kind of a boy he was. In that big crowd of men and boys of all ages, he was the only one that thought of taking food along with him into the desert. The crowd was very much excited over the wonderful things which Christ was doing every day. He was giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, walking to the lame, health to the sick, pardon to sinners, courage to the cowardly, cleanness to the lepers, and even life to the dead. The strong men began to think of making Christ their King. All were so excited that they followed our Lord without proper thought for their journey, and would have perished in the desert had not Christ taken thought for them.

Now this one boy had the same thought for himself which Christ had for the crowd. His good mother said to him, very likely: Take this lunch with you, for you may be a long time on the road; and bring me word of all that you see and hear about this wonderful Jesus; and do not eat your lunch too soon, as so many boys do, but keep it for the last moment; then you will not faint on the road, or be forced to beg of strangers. The lad did just as he was told; or, if she did not tell him, his good sense directed him what to do. He hid his lunch in his little dress, and kept it a secret, so that the bolder men would not know of it. Like every boy, he kept close to the front of the procession, where Jesus and his disciples walked. When the crowd camped out at night, sleeping in the mild air, the boy kept close to Jesus.

They marched so far that all the food was gone in a short time, and men began to faint on the way; so that Jesus had to order a rest and to consider the question of feeding the crowd. The boy heard the discussion, he saw the fainting men, he knew the danger pressing on them. Up to this moment he had been a careful boy; now he became a generous boy. He told the disciple of his five loaves and two fishes, and offered them to Jesus for the crowd. How the glad disciple must have smiled on the lad and blessed him, both for his careful habit and his generous heart! How the Lord Jesus must have embraced him and blessed him for his prudence and his kind-heartedness! He gave the lad his reward on the spot. He took his bread and fish and multiplied it five thousand times and more. He honored him before the crowd. He gave him a place in his beautiful Gospel, thus making a mere boy an example of prudence and generosity for all the world, for all time. What a fortunate boy!

What became of him? Can't you see for yourself? He carried the blessing of Jesus home with him. Already he had shown his carefulness, his courage, his kindness, his obedience. I think he showed those qualities for the rest of his life, and the blessing of our Lord Jesus confirmed them in him forever. I would like to have known that lad, but the next best thing is to know and love the boys of to-day who are like this boy of the Gospel in their good qualities.

WRINKLES AS WITNESSES

"Thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me."—*Job* xvi. 8

Job had boils on his mind as well as on his body, many trials to make him sad, so many trials to rob him of his patience. We find one very peculiar reason that made him complain: *his wrinkles.* He said they would witness against him. How very many people since the time of Job have complained because of wrinkles.

You young people have beautiful faces, but if you let selfishness, envy, jealousy and other sins get into your heart, wrinkles will write the result on your face. They will be a witness against you.

Once upon a time, as most fairy stories begin, there lived in a large city a little girl who was very much dissatisfied because she could not have her own way in every thing. And she was very selfish, too, giving no thought to the comfort of others until she was first attended to. One day she came to her mother and said: "Mamma, I want a new cloak."

"But I can not afford to buy you a cloak," said the mother.

"Why not?" asked the little girl pettishly.

"Because I haven't the money to spare; besides, your brother needs a coat. Wear your old cloak for a little longer, my dear."

"Well, I won't, and so there!"

The little girl had no sooner uttered these words than she slammed the door and went up-stairs to her room. For a long time she lay on the bed crying with vexation. Finally, she arose and went to the closet where she kept her clothes, and took down the old cloak.

"Hateful old thing!" she exclaimed, flinging the garment across the room, "I'll never wear you again." At that moment she caught sight of her own reflection in the looking-glass over her bureau, and she was so startled at beholding such a face that she did not recognize herself at all.

"Keep on, keep on," said a tiny voice. "You'll soon make yourself old and ugly and wrinkled."

The little girl was surprised but not frightened, for the voice did not sound harsh.

"Speak again, please," she begged, "and let me see you."

"Not until you smile," said the mysterious voice.

"I don't feel like smiling, for I am very much vexed," said the little girl. "Are you a fairy?"

"Yes."

"Oh, come quickly, and let me see you."

Then she smiled very sweetly, and the fairy showed herself—a tiny creature all dressed in white, and she stood on a pincushion.

"Now, then, listen to me," went on the fairy. "Think of your mother and your brother, and not of yourself. Above all things, don't get angry again."

"Why not?" asked the little girl.

"Anger brings wrinkles and unhappiness. Shall I come again?"

"Yes, indeed. Come often. And, dear little fairy, forgive me for acting so, won't you?"

"I will. Good-by."

"Good-by," answered the little girl in a happy voice. She then began to sing very softly to herself.

When she went down-stairs again, she took the cloak, and said as she entered the room: "Mamma, why, my cloak isn't so old as I thought. I'm not going to get angry again, because I don't want to be naughty and have wrinkles before I get old—truly old, you know."

And the little girl kept her promise and was very happy, because she thought more of others than she did of herself. This may be hard to do, but there is nothing better that any one can do.

THE LITTLE BROWN BED

A SERMON FOR EASTER

"I sleep, but my heart waketh."—*Song of Solomon* v. 2

Did you ever see a flower going asleep? When it begins to droop and hang its head, it is getting sleepy. Watch it and you will see how snugly it rolls itself up in a little brown bed you call a seed. In this bed the flower is sound asleep. The flower sleeps all Winter, "as snug as a bug in a rug." What you call "Spring," the season after Winter, is "Mother Nature," going from bed to bed to wake up her flower friends asleep in the seeds. She has a big family to wake up. She lifts the shades of Winter and lets in the bright light. If they do not wake she sprinkles water on them, shakes them, and keeps her temper until all are awake. Some are easy to wake and they get right up, others are very sleepy and dear old Spring has to be very patient. They sleep, but, 'way down in the seed something is awake. They sleep but the seed-heart waketh. Some one whose name I do not know, a friend of "Mother Spring," says:

"Far down in Mother Earth a tiny seed was sleeping, safely wrapt in a warm bed. The little seed had been asleep for a long, long time, and now somebody thought it was time to wake up. This somebody was an earthworm, a friend of Mother Spring. He had been creeping about and found all the seeds in the neighborhood had roused themselves. They were pushing their roots down into the earth and lifting their heads up through the soil into the bright sunshine and fresh air. So when the worm saw this little seed still sleeping, he cried, 'Oh, you lazy fellow, wake up! All the seeds are awake and growing, and you have slept long enough!'

"'But how can I grow or move at all in this tight brown sleeping-gown?' said the seed, in a drowsy tone.

"'Why, push it off; that's the way the other seeds have done. Just move about a little and it will come off.' All the time the worm was telling him how happy the other seeds were, now that they had lifted their heads into the sunshine.

"'Oh, dear! Oh, dear!' said the seed, 'what shall I do? I am so sleepy I can't keep awake any longer,' and he fell asleep again.

"The little seed slept soundly for a long time. At last he awoke and found Mother Spring throwing water in his face. She called it a Spring shower for the May flower.

"Then he felt so warm and happy that he cried, 'I really believe I am going to grow after all. Who woke me up and helped me out of bed? I don't see any one near by.'

"'I woke you,' said a soft voice close by. 'I am a sunbeam. Mother Spring sent me to wake you, and my friends the rain-drops washed the sleep out of your eyes.'

"'Oh, thank you,' said the seed. 'You're all very kind. Will you help me to grow into a plant too?'

"'Yes,' said the sunbeam, 'I'll come as often as I can to help you, and the rain-drops will come too. If you work hard, with our help, you will become a beautiful plant, I'm sure.'

"'But,' said the seed, 'how did you know that I was sleeping here? Could you see me?'

"'No,' said the sunbeam, 'but Mother Spring saw you. She saw you beneath the ground trying to grow. She called the rain-drops to her, and said, 'One of my seed-children is sleeping down there, and he wants to grow. Go down and help him and tell the sunbeams to follow you and wake the seed, so that he may begin to grow as soon as he will.'

"'How kind she is,' said the seed; 'if she had not seen me sleeping here I should have slept on and on and on, slept forever in my little brown bed. How did Mother Spring know I was here?'

"'She is a servant of God, who knows all things. He knows where every seed sleeps and sends Mother Spring with her friends to wake them up.'

"'How can I thank him?' said the seed. 'What can I do that will please him very much?'

"'Grow into the best plant that you possibly can,' said the sunbeam. 'That will please God most of all.'

"So the seed grew into a beautiful vine. He climbed higher and higher toward the heavens, from which the Father smiled down upon him to reward his labor."

There is some one more beautiful and valuable than a flower. Some one who needs sleep more than the seed needs it, and who says:

"Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep." This some one is a little child.

Before going to sleep you should say, "In the morning wake me from sleep—mother, wake me from sleep." How often you would be late for breakfast, late for school, late for church, if mother did not wake you.

What part of you wakes up the rest of you when mother calls? The part of you that does not sleep. The part that keeps on thinking while you sleep. You call the thinking a dream. What does our text say? "I sleep, but my heart waketh." It is that part that will never sleep. What we call death the Bible calls sleep. There is a short sleep from which we wake in the morning. Then there is a long sleep from which we will wake some morning in heaven. There is a beautiful story in the ninth chapter of Matthew.

A man came to Christ and told him that his dear little girl was dead. Christ went home with the father, and when he saw the little girl, he said, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." The people laughed at Christ and told him the little girl was dead. Christ woke her as gently as Spring wakes the seed, took her by the hand and she arose. She was only asleep. The word "cemetery" means *sleeping-place*. As Mother Spring wakes the seed, so your mother wakes you. Our greatest friend, Christ, will some day wake all who sleep, all who are called dead. Listen!

"My beloved spake, and said unto me, 'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away, for lo, the Winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.' "

Would it not be splendid to write on the tomb, "I sleep, but my heart waketh."

Rejoice, for Spring is here!

WHAT IS GOOD SUCCESS?

"Do according to all the law, . . . then thou shalt have good success."—*Joshua* i. 7, 8

WHAT should we mean when we say that a man has had a very successful life? Should we mean simply that he has succeeded in doing what he undertook to do? No, not merely that. A great writer tells us that if the thing done is bad, then the doer has not succeeded. Good success, then, requires that things done shall be good things, things done because they are good and not merely for the sake of doing something, of working one's selfish will.

Children who are old enough to understand the meaning of the following words will do well to think of them often, and children not yet quite old enough to understand them should be led in the way that will bring them where they can understand them in due time. These are the words of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who wrote many beautiful things for children of different ages:

"Lending your strength, be it great or small, to the united struggle of mankind, this is success, all the success that anybody meets with."

And here are wise words written by a good woman, Mrs. A. J. Stanley, of Lincoln, Kansas, which a learned clergyman tells us we should do well "to paste up somewhere in sight":

"He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much; who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it; who has always looked for the best in others and given the best he had; whose life was an inspiration, whose memory a benediction."

The men and women, the boys and girls, who reach success of this kind are those who do what they do as nearly as they can according to the law of right living—the law of right itself, the law of truth, the law of love. In work and in play, in school and in vacation, at home or abroad, in the daily doings of the busy world, let each one keep the law of right living, and to each the promise will be fulfilled: "Thou shalt have good success."

"AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS WITH THE ANGEL A MULTITUDE OF THE HEAVENLY HOST PRAISING GOD."
—LUKE ii. 13.

HYMNS THAT EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW

LITTLE CHILDREN, COME TO JESUS

Little children, come to Jesus;
Hear him saying, "Come to me";
Blessed Jesus, who to save us
Shed his blood on Calvary.
Little souls were made to serve him,
All his holy law fulfill;
Little hearts were made to love him,
Little hands to do his will.

Little eyes to read the Bible
Given from the heavens above;
Little ears to hear the story
Of the Saviour's wondrous love;
Little tongues to sing his praises,
Little feet to walk his ways,
Little bodies to be temples
Where the Holy Spirit stays.

THERE'S A FOLD BOTH SAFE AND HAPPY

BY MARY MANNING

There's a fold both safe and happy,
Where the little ones may dwell;
And secure the Shepherd guards it,
For the lambs he loves so well;
Through the pleasant fields he leads them,
By the streamlets fresh and clear;
Rest and gladness gives he to them,
And his blessed voice they hear.

Many of his lambs are resting,
In a yet more peaceful fold,
Sheltered from the heat of summer,
Sheltered from the winter's cold;
In a bright and happy country,
Where 'tis always fresh and fair;
And the presence of the Shepherd
Bideth ever with them there.

Of that fold the doors stand open,
And its rest each one may win;
For the welcome of the Master
Greeteth all who enter in;
Then will be the happy meetings
With the lambs that went before,
One blest fold and one dear Shepherd,
Safe at home for evermore.

THE LITTLE LORD JESUS

BY MARTIN LUTHER

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay—
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

WHEN THE LITTLE CHILDREN SLEEP

When the little children sleep,
Little stars are waking;
Angels bright from heaven come,
And till morn is breaking,
They will watch the livelong night,
By their beds till morning light;
When the little children sleep,
Stars and angels watch do keep.

When the little children wake,
Little stars are sleeping,
Angels bright in raiment white,
Still their watch are keeping;
They will watch by night or day,
Never let them go astray,
When the little children wake,
When the little children wake.

JESUS, HOLY, UNDEFILED

BY MRS. E. SHEPCOTE

Jesus, holy, undefiled,
Listen to a little child;
Thou hast sent the glorious light,
Chasing far the silent night.

Thou hast sent the sun to shine
O'er this glorious world of thine,
Warmth to give and pleasant glow,
On each tender flow'r below.

Now the little birds arise,
Chirping gaily in the skies;
Thee their tiny voices praise,
In the early songs they raise.

Thou, by whom the birds are fed,
Give to me my daily bread;
And thy holy Spirit give,
Without whom I cannot live.

THOU THAT ONCE ON MOTHER'S KNEE

BY FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE

Thou that once on mother's knee
Wert a little one like me,
When I wake or go to bed,
Lay thy hand about my head;
Let me feel thee very near,
Jesus Christ, my Saviour dear.

Be beside me in the light,
Close beside me all the night;
Make me gentle, kind, and true,
Do what mother bids me do;
Help and cheer me when I fret,
And forgive when I forget.

Thou art near me when I pray,
Though thou art so far away;
Thou my little hymn wilt hear,
Jesus Christ, my Saviour dear;
Thou that once on mother's knee
Wert a little child like me.

ONE LITTLE STAR

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE

One little star in the starry night,
One little beam in the noonday light,
One little drop in the river's might,
What can they do, oh, what can they do?
One little flow'r in the flowerful spring,
One little feather in one little wing,
One little note when the many birds sing,
All are so little, feeble and few.

Each little star has its special ray,
Each little beam has its place in the day,
Each little river drop impulse and sway;
Feather and flower and songlet help too.

Each little child can some love-work find,
Each little hand and each little mind,
All can be gentle and useful and kind,
Though they are little, like me and like you.

THERE IS A HAPPY LAND

BY ANDREW YOUNG

There is a happy land,
  Far, far away,
Where saints in glory stand,
  Bright, bright as day.
O how they sweetly sing,
"Worthy is our Saviour King,"
Loud let his praises ring,
  Praise, praise for aye!

Come to that happy land,
  Come, come away;
Why will ye doubting stand,
  Why still delay?
O we shall happy be,
When from sin and sorrow free,
Lord, we shall dwell with thee,
  Blest, blest for aye!

Bright in that happy land,
  Beams ev'ry eye;
Kept by a Father's hand,
  Love cannot die.
O then to glory run;
Be a crown and kingdom won,
And bright, above the sun,
  We'll reign for aye!

I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY

BY KATHERINE HANKEY

I love to tell the story
  Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and his glory,
  Of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story,
  Because I know 'tis true;
It satisfies my longings
  As nothing else can do.

REFRAIN

I love to tell the story,
'Twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story;
'Tis pleasant to repeat
What seems, each time I tell it,
More wonderfully sweet.
I love to tell the story;
For some have never heard
The message of salvation
From God's own holy Word.—REF.

I love to tell the story;
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story
That I have loved so long.—REF.

ALL THINGS BEAUTIFUL AND FAIR

ALL things beautiful and fair,
Earth and sky and balmy air,
Sunny field and shady grove,
Gently whisper, "God is love!"
Ev'ry tree and flow'r we pass,
Ev'ry tuft of waving grass,
Ev'ry leaf and opening bud,
Seem to tell us, "God is good."

Little streams that glide along,
Soft green mossy banks among,
Shadowing forth the clouds above,
Softly murmur, "God is love!"
He who dwelleth high in heav'n,
Unto us has all things given;
Let us as through life we move,
Ever feel that "God is love!"

I AM GOD'S LITTLE CHILD

I AM God's little child,
Made by his loving hand;
These little eyes he made to see,
These feet he made to stand.

More wonderful I am
Than I shall ever know,
For to these limbs of mine is giv'n
The wondrous power to grow.

What can I do to please
The God so good to me?
I'll daily try each hour to live
The life he loves to see.

These feet shall stand for him,
These eyes look on his face;
And as each year I grow in height,
I'll try to grow in grace.

This tongue shall speak no word
His Spirit grieves to hear,
Nor shall this hand he made e'er cause
One needless pain or tear.

I'll see how Jesus lived
By reading in his word,
And try to be his little child
Just following my Lord.

JESUS LOVES ME! THIS I KNOW

BY ANNA B. WARNER

JESUS loves me! this I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to him belong,
They are weak, but he is strong.

Jesus loves me! he who died,
Heaven's gate to open wide;
He will wash away my sin,
Let his little child come in.

Jesus loves me, loves me still,
When I 'm very weak and ill;
From his shining throne on high,
Comes to watch me where I lie.

Jesus loves me! he will stay
Close beside me all the way;
If I love him, when I die
He will take me home on high.

JESUS BIDS US SHINE

JESUS bids us shine
With a pure, clear light,
Like a little candle,
Burning in the night;
In the world is darkness,
So we must shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine
First of all for him.
Well he sees and knows it
If our light grows dim;

He looks down from heaven
To see us shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine
Then, for all around;
For many kinds of darkness
In the world are found,
Sin and want and sorrow;
So we must shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

IF YOU CANNOT ON THE OCEAN

BY ELLEN H. GATES

If you cannot on the ocean
Sail among the swiftest fleet,
Rocking on the highest billows,
Laughing at the storms you meet,
You can stand among the sailors,
Anchored yet within the bay,
You can lend a hand to help them,
As they launch their boat away.

If you have not gold and silver
Ever ready to command;
If you cannot tow'rd the needy
Reach an ever open hand,
You can visit the afflicted,
O'er the erring you can weep;
You can be a true disciple
Sitting at the Saviour's feet.

If you cannot in the harvest
Garner up the richest sheaf,
Many a grain both ripe and golden
Will the careless reapers leave;
Go and glean among the briers,
Growing rank against the wall,
For it may be that the shadow
Hides the heaviest wheat of all.

PASS IT ON

BY HENRY BURTON

Have you had a kindness shown?
Pass it on;
'Twas not giv'n for thee alone,
Pass it on;
Let it travel down the years,
Let it wipe another's tears,
Till in heav'n the deed appears—
Pass it on.

Did you hear the loving word—
Pass it on;
Like the singing of a bird?
Pass it on;
Let its music live and grow,
Let it cheer another's woe,
You have reap'd what others sow,
Pass it on.

'Twas the sunshine of a smile—
Pass it on;
Staying but a little while!
Pass it on;
April beam, the little thing,
Still it wakes the flow'rs of spring,
Makes the silent birds to sing—
Pass it on.

Have you found the heav'nly light?
Pass it on;
Souls are groping in the night,
Daylight gone;
Hold thy lighted lamp on high,
Be a star in some one's sky,
He may live who else would die,
Pass it on.

Be not selfish in thy greed,
Pass it on;
Look upon thy brother's need,
Pass it on;
Live for self, you live in vain;
Live for Christ, you live again;
Live for him, with him you reign—
Pass it on.

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

BY JOSEPH SCRIVEN

What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
O, what peace we often forfeit,
O, what needless pain we bear—
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
In his arms he'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

HARK, HARK, MY SOUL

BY FREDERICK W. FABER

Hark, hark, my soul! angelic songs are swelling
O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore:
How sweet the truth those blessed strains are telling
Of that new life when sin shall be no more.

Refrain

Angels of Jesus,
Angels of light,
Singing to welcome the pilgrims of the night,
Singing to welcome the pilgrims, the pilgrims of the night.

Onward we go, for still we hear them singing,
Come, weary souls, for Jesus bids you come;
And thro' the dark, its echoes sweetly ringing,
The music of the gospel leads us home.

Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea;
And laden souls, by thousands meekly stealing,
Kind Shepherd, turn their weary steps to thee.

Angels, sing on, your faithful watches keeping,
Sing us sweet fragments of the songs above;
Till morning's joy shall end the night of weeping,
And life's long shadows break in cloudless love.

SUN OF MY SOUL

BY JOHN KEBLE

Sun of my soul! thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near;
Oh, may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes!

When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My weary eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought—how sweet to rest
Forever on my Saviour's breast!

Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without thee I cannot live;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without thee I dare not die.

Be near to bless me when I wake,
Ere thro' the world my way I take;
Abide with me till in thy love
I lose myself in heaven above.

I LOOK TO THEE IN EVERY NEED

BY SAMUEL LONGFELLOW

I look to thee in every need,
And never look in vain;
I feel thy touch, Eternal Love,
And all is well again;
The thought of thee is mightier far
Than sin and pain and sorrow are.

Discouraged in the work of life,
Disheartened by its load,
Shamed by its failures or its fears,
I sink beside the road,—
But let me only think of thee,
And then new heart springs up in me.

Thy calmness bends serene above,
My restlessness to still;
Around me flows thy quick'ning life
To nerve my falt'ring will;
Thy presence fills my solitude;
Thy providence turns all to good.

Embosomed deep in thy dear love,
Held in thy law I stand;
Thy hand in all things I behold,
And all things in thy hand;
Thou leadest me by unsought ways,
And turn'st my mourning into praise.

BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES

BY KNOWLES SHAW

Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eves;
Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping,
We shall come, rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Chorus

Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come, rejoicing,
Bringing in the sheaves;
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come, rejoicing,
Bringing in the sheaves.

Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,
Fearing neither clouds nor winter's chilling breeze;
By and by the harvest, and the labor ended,
We shall come, rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Going forth with weeping, sowing for the Master,
Tho' the loss sustained our spirit often grieves;
When our weeping's over, he will bid us welcome,
We shall come, rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

HOW SWEET THE NAME OF JESUS SOUNDS

BY JOHN NEWTON

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast:
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

Dear name! the rock on which I build;
My shield and hiding-place,
My never-failing treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace.

Jesus, my Shepherd, Guardian, Friend;
My Prophet, Priest, and King;
My Lord, my life, my way, mine end,
Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought:

Till then, I would thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And may the music of thy name
Refresh my soul in death.

AM I A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS

BY ISAAC WATTS

Am I a soldier of the cross—
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own his cause,
Or blush to speak his name?

In the name of Christ the King,
Who hath purchased life for me,
Through grace I'll win the promised crown,
Whate'er my cross may be.

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Since I must fight if I would reign,
Increase my courage, Lord!
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word.

ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

BY SABINE BARING-GOULD

Onward, Christian soldiers! marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before.
Christ, the Royal Master, leads against the foe;
Forward into battle see his banners go.
Onward, Christian soldiers! marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before.

At the sign of triumph, Satan's host doth flee;
On then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!
Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise:
Brothers, lift your voices, loud your anthems raise!

Like a mighty army moves the Church of God:
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;
We are not divided, all one body we—
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane;
But the Church of Jesus constant will remain;
Gates of hell can never 'gainst that Church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise—and that cannot fail.

Onward then, ye people, join our happy throng;
Blend with ours your voices in the triumph-song:
"Glory, laud, and honor unto Christ the King"—
This through countless ages men and angels sing.

THERE WERE NINETY AND NINE

BY ELIZABETH C. CLEPHANE

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold;
But one was out on the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold—
Away on the mountains wild and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.

"Lord, thou hast here thy ninety and nine,
Are they not enough for thee?"
But the Shepherd made answer, "This of mine
Has wandered away from me;
And although the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep."

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through,
Ere he found his sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert he heard its cry—
Sick, and helpless, and ready to die.

"Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way,
That mark out the mountain's track?"
"They were shed for one who had gone astray,
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back."
"Lord, whence are thy hands so rent and torn?"
"They are pierced to-night by many a thorn."

But all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a cry to the gate of heaven,
"Rejoice! I have found my sheep!"
And the angels echoed around the throne,
"Rejoice! for the Lord brings back his own."

WHAT I LIVE FOR

BY G. LINNÆUS BANKS

I live for those who love me,
Whose hearts are kind and true,
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And awaits my spirit too;
For all human ties that bind me,
For the task by God assigned me,
For the bright hopes yet to find me,
And the good that I can do.

I live to learn their story
Who suffered for my sake;
To emulate their glory,
And follow in their wake—
Bards, patriots, martyrs, sages,
The heroic of all ages,
Whose deeds crowd history's pages,
And Time's great volume make.

I live to hold communion
With all that is divine,
To feel there is a union
'Twixt Nature's heart and mine;
To profit by affliction,
Reap truth from fields of fiction,
Grow wiser from conviction,
And fulfil God's grand design.

I live to hail that season,
By gifted ones foretold,
When men shall live by reason,
And not alone by gold;
When man to man united,
And every wrong thing righted,
The whole world shall be lighted
As Eden was of old.

I live for those who love me,
For those who know me true,
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And awaits my spirit too;
For the cause that lacks assistance,
For the wrong that needs resistance,
For the future in the distance,
And the good that I can do.

WORK, FOR THE NIGHT IS COMING

BY IRA D. SANKEY

Work, for the night is coming!
Work through the morning hours;
Work while the dew is sparkling,
Work 'mid springing flowers:
Work when the day grows brighter,
Work in the glowing sun;
Work, for the night is coming,
When man's work is done.

Work, for the night is coming,
Work through the sunny noon:
Fill brightest hours with labor,
Rest comes sure and soon.
Give every flying minute
Something to keep in store:
Work, for the night is coming,
When man works no more.

Work, for the night is coming,
Under the sunset skies!
While their bright tints are glowing
Work, for daylight flies.

Work till the last beam fadeth,
Fadeth to shine no more:
Work while the night is dark'ning,
When man's work is o'er.

JERUSALEM THE GOLDEN

BY BERNARD OF CLUNY

Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice opprest.
I know not, oh, I know not,
What joys await us there;
What radiancy of glory,
What light beyond compare!

They stand, those halls of Sion,
All jubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel,
And all the martyr throng.
The Prince is ever in them;
The daylight is serene;
The pastures of the blessèd
Are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David;
And there, from care released,
The shout of them that triumph,
The song of them that feast;
And they who, with their Leader,
Have conquered in the fight,
Forever and forever
Are clad in robes of white.

O sweet and blessèd country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessèd country,
That eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest;
Who art, with God the Father,
And Spirit, ever blest.

ROCK OF AGES

BY A. M. TOPLADY

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!
Let the water and the blood,
From thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfil thy law's demands:
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and thou alone!

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly:
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!

While I draw this fleeting breath—
When my eye-strings break in death—
When I soar to worlds unknown—
See thee on thy judgment throne—
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!

JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL

BY CHARLES WESLEY

Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide:
O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed;
All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of thy wing.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name;
I am all unrighteousness:
False and full of sin I am;
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of thee;
Spring thou up within my heart,
Rise, to all eternity.

SOFTLY NOW THE LIGHT OF DAY

BY G. W. DOANE

Softly now the light of day
Fades upon my sight away;
Free from care, from labor free,
Lord, I would commune with thee.

Thou, whose all-pervading eye
Naught escapes, without, within,
Pardon each infirmity,
Open fault, and secret sin.

Soon, for me, the light of day
Shall forever pass away;
Then, from sin and sorrow free,
Take me, Lord, to dwell with thee.

ABIDE WITH ME

BY HENRY F. LYTE

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide:
The darkness thickens: Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see:
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word,
But as thou dwell'st with thy disciples, Lord—
Familiar, condescending, patient, free—
Come not to sojourn, but abide with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in thy wings;
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea;
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh abide with me.

I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless,
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is Death's sting? where, Grave, thy
victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the
skies:
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain
shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE

BY SARAH FLOWER ADAMS

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

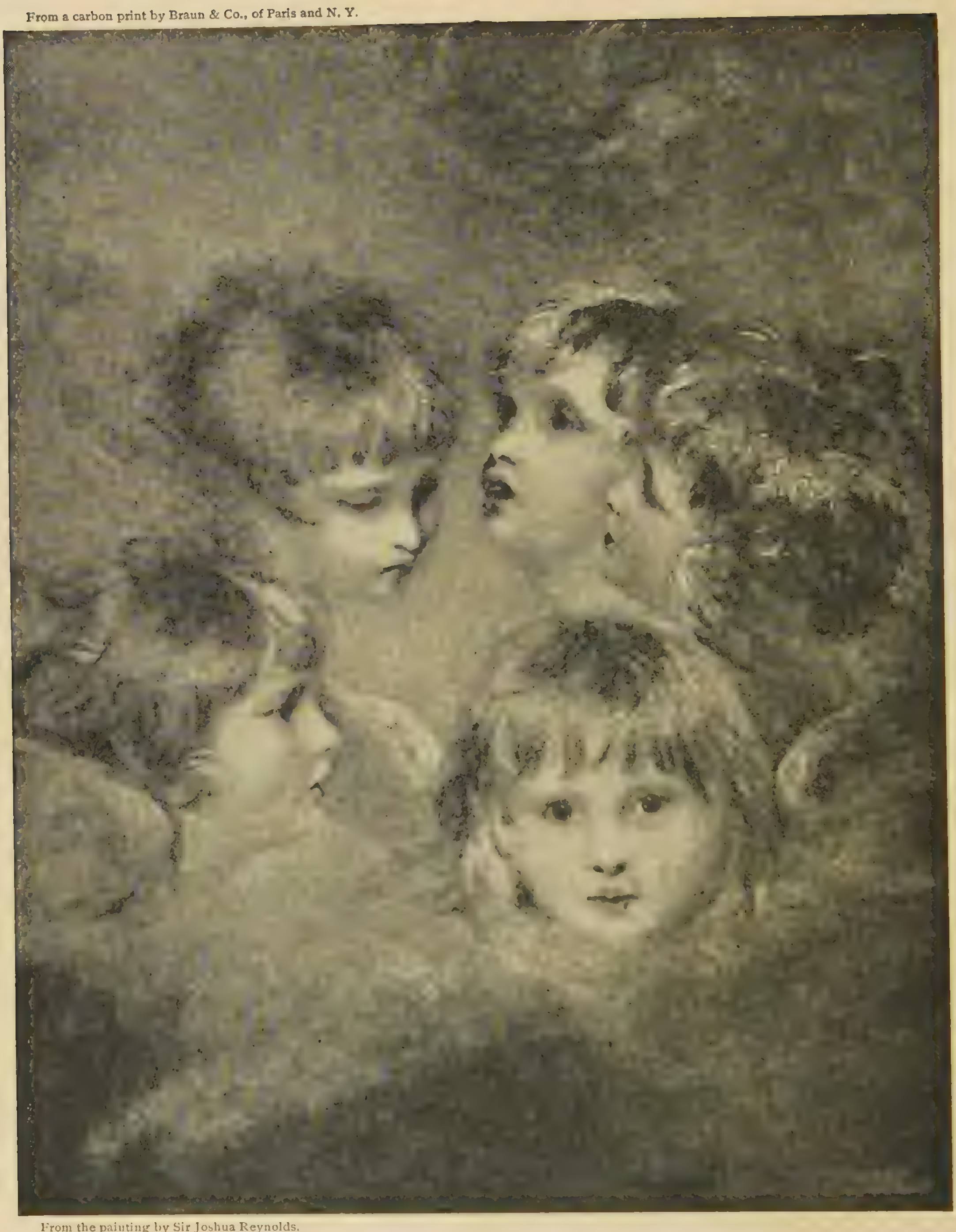
Though, like the wanderer,
Daylight all gone,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone:
Yet in my dreams I 'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

There let the way appear
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou send'st to me,
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

Then with my waking thoughts
Bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I 'll raise:
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

Or if on joyful wing,
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I fly;
Still, still, my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

From a carbon print by Braun & Co., of Paris and N. Y.



From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

ANGELS' HEADS.

THIS PICTURE IS ONE OF THE FINEST BY THE ENGLISH ARTIST WHO PAINTED IT; AND WE ARE TOLD THAT IT PRESENTS FIVE DIFFERENT VIEWS OF ONE LITTLE GIRL'S HEAD.

PRAYERS For Boys & Girls

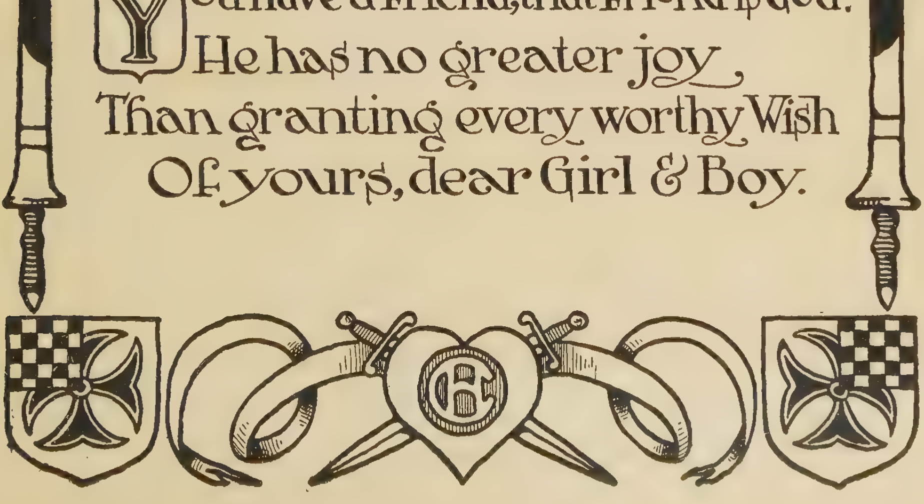
BY JOHN MARTIN
(MORGAN SHEPARD)

A Prayer is a Wish

I'm sure you often wish a Wish,
Which is all right to do.
And very often things you wish
Are apt to come to you.

A Wish is just a sort of Prayer.
And PRAYERS are Wishes too;
So why not *pray* an earnest Wish,
And see it all come true.

You have a Friend, that Friend is God.
He has no greater joy,
Than granting every worthy Wish
Of yours, dear Girl & Boy.



PRAYERS *for* LITTLE BOYS

THE LIE

Dear God, I told a lie today:
I thought it was an easy way
To hide some things that I had done
From Mother, and from every one.
Please, God, forgive me, and I'll try
To never tell another Lie.

Help me to learn when I am young
That no one trusts a lying tongue.
When I tell Mother I was bad,
I hope she won't be very sad;
For if You help me, God, I can
Grow up to be an honest man.

AMEN

ANGER

Dear God, to-day You saw me when
I was so angry and so bad.
You saw how very, very sad
I made poor Mother then.
Dear God, an awful feeling came,
And filled my heart with cruel sin,
And all the ugliness within
Flashed out just like a flame.

I know, I know I should'nt dare
To let that wicked temper burn.
Teach me Control, help me to learn
To stop it when it's there.
Teach me to know that every fit
Of Anger makes me less a Man;
Please show me how each time I can
Just quench and smother it. AMEN.

FIGHTING

O God, I had a fight to-day;
In rage I punched and hit.
I didn't care in any way,
I even scratched and bit.
I snarled just like a savage beast,
I bunted without heeding.
I didn't seem to care the least
That I was soiled and bleeding.

O God, I know You do not care
Who won that beastly fight.
But I know well that You were there
And saw the brutal sight.
O, please, God, teach me better pluck,
Which looks at Courage gravely,
And only fights when blows are struck
Defending others bravely.

AMEN.

A KNIGHT

O Lord, I want to be a Knight
With armor bright & lance at rest.
I want to go into the fight
And do my level best.
But Knights are gone. Perhaps I can
Just make believe, and I can try
To be a Gallant Gentle Man,
And bravely do, or die.

I know that kind of Knight is best,
For times are somewhat different.
But I can go upon a “quest”,
Just as the others went.
And Mother, she will watch and see
How I do battle for the right.
Then she'll be rather proud of me,
Her Gentle Man and Knight.

AMEN.

GOING TO SCHOOL

Dear God, a school day comes again,
With many things for me to do.
Please bless my heart and guide my brain.
O, make me earnest, strong and true.
My lessons may seem dull to me
And study hours long and dry,
But if You help me, then I'll see
How fast those useful hours fly.

Dear God, this world is *new* to boys,-
There is so much to see and learn.
Each day brings wonders, tasks and joys;
It's hard to know which way to turn.
O God, please watch me every day,
And when I need you, take my hand.
O guide me safely on my way,
And help my heart to understand.

AMEN.

PRAYERS for LITTLE GIRLS

FEAR

Dear God, You are my friend, I know
And You are always near:
Please come into my heart and show
How I can conquer Fear.
Please be a kind of Sentinel,
That always gives me aid;
And when I'm frightened You will tell
Me *not* to be afraid.

Dear God, there are some things for me
Too big to understand,
But I am sure that I can see
If You just hold my hand.
Then very soon I will be brave
Because a FRIEND is here,
Who likes to watch, and who will save
My heart from every fear. AMEN.

SELFISHNESS

Dear God, forgive my selfish heart,
And help me, please, to try to start
All over right tomorrow.
Help me to think of things to do
To make folks happy when I'm through,
Instead of making *sorrow*.

Dear God, help me to see and know
That thoughtful service makes us grow
A joy to one another.
So help me, God, to *want* to serve
And think of others, and deserve
The *selfless* love of Mother.

AMEN.

DISOBEDIENCE

Dear God, teach me the reason why
I shouldn't always have my way.
O show me plainly that it is
A great *mistake* to disobey.
I know I'm just a little girl
But, still dear God, I ought to see
That Mother knows what I should do,
And what is really best for me.

Teach me to be obedient
O, make me always understand
That if I mind when I am young
I must grow worthy to command.
O God, I need Your guiding hand
To lead me *surely* day by day,
I need Your wisdom so I'll see
That all the *truest* girls *OBEY.* AMEN.

SHIRKING

O God, I often fuss and fret
When Mother gives me things to do.
I don't go right ahead to get
Those very simple duties through.
I do not do my work with care
And I refuse to use my Head;
My thoughts go wandering everywhere
When they should stay at Home instead.

O God, please help my heart to see
How good it is to *love* my Work.
And make my Hands refuse to be
The thoughtless Servants of a SHIRK.
O teach me, God, that every day
Will give me more and better fun
If I but *work* in just the way
To get my DUTIES all *WELL DONE*. **AMEN.**

FOR BOYS

EVIL THOUGHTS

Dear God, not even Mother could
See all the Evil Thoughts that *would*
Keep stealing in my heart to-day,
When I seemed only just at play.
But oh, those Evil Thoughts crept in
Like serpents, telling me to sin.
The Evil Thoughts all left a track
Across my heart, and made it black.

I am ashamed to look and see
If Mother knows the thoughts in me.
I cannot watch her dear eyes shine,
For fear she'll see the sin in mine.
Please make my thoughts all good and pure,
And then I may be very sure
That I have true and honest eyes
Where not one thought of evil lies.
Amen.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Dear God, I struck my dog to-day,
He cowered very low,
And looking up, he seemed to say,
"How could you treat me so?"
And then, O God, I struck again,
My ugly wrath to spend;
I gave a speechless creature pain,
I hurt a faithful friend.

O God, it was a wicked burst
Of brutal cruelty,
To strike an animal whose first
And last love is for me.
It was a friend that has no speech
To tell of need or pain.
O God, forgive the sin and teach
Me not to sin again. Amen.

THEFT

O God, it's very hard to say
That I'm a *thief,* but I must tell.
You saw me take a thing away
That wasn't mine,—I knew it well.
Because I wanted it was not
The least excuse for *stealing* it,
Because it wasn't much, I've got
No reason for concealing it.

So please, God, help my heart to feel
The strength that honest living brings,
For only cowards want to steal,
Or covet other people's things.
May I look *straight* at everything
That isn't mine, *respecting it.*
And may my hand and heart both bring
Just Honesty, *protecting it.*
Amen.

WASHING

Dear Lord, sometimes my hair gets quite
Untidy, rough, and mussy;
And when my Mother makes it right
I'm apt to think she's fussy.
My hands get black with different dirts,
And when no one is present,
I don't half wash; I think it hurts
To make myself more pleasant.

Please make me feel that Cleanliness
Is just a proper virtue,
And that cold water's here to bless,
And never here to hurt you.
Please show me how I always can
Do simple things, that lead to
The making of a gentleman,
And *wash,* because I need to. Amen.

KIND THOUGHTS AND GENTLE WORDS

Dear God, teach me when I am young
To help my heart to guide my tongue.
Put Love and Goodness in my mind,
And thoughts that make my words all
kind.
Words are just made to tell a thought,
So when we speak, I'm sure we ought
To use the words we know are best,
And then forget about the rest.

Help me, dear God, to try to say
A lot of Kind Words every day.
And help my Heart to keep a store
Of kindly thoughts to make some more.
Please help me, God, so then I can
See *why* kind thoughts just make a *Man*.
Brave Men are kind, because they know
That Good Kind Thoughts just *make*
them so. Amen.

GOING TO BED

Dear Lord, I'll soon be in my bed,
To go to sleep and rest.
And Thoughts will come into my head,
Please make them just the best.
Please send the kind of thoughts that
make
Good dreams and helpful sleep.
So that to-morrow, when I wake,
I'll have good thoughts to keep.

And when to-morrow morning's Sun
Brings work and play again,
Help me to play and have some fun,
And work with might and main.
Please bless my family, and give
Us happy hearts and bright,
And be our Friend, so we can live
Near You, dear Lord—Good Night.
Amen.

FOR GIRLS

DISCONTENT

Dear God, to-day I moped around,
I almost sulked, and acted blue.
I sighed and puttered, fussed and
frowned,
And couldn't find a thing to do.
My eyes were blind, and didn't see
A hundred happy things, just meant
To occupy a girl like me,
And stop my selfish discontent.

Oh, please, God, help my heart to find
The happy things that come each day.
Please give me just the kind of mind
That thinks in just the *wisest* way.
And help me every day I live
To see the blessings You have sent.
But, best of all, dear God, please give
My heart the *Blessing* of *Content*.
Amen.

THE SULKS

Dear God, I'm sulky now and then,
It's hard to say what makes me so;
But Sulks get right inside me when
I'm cross or selfish, then they grow.
I just can feel them giving me
A gloomy face and sullen pout;
So You and every one must be
Uncomfortable, when I'm about.

Dear God, I'm sure You know a way
To stop the Sulks, because they're *bad*.
Please close my heart to them, for they
Make me just miserable and sad.
Please change the look upon my face,
And teach me that a simple smile
Will cure the Sulks, and in their place
Put good looks, in a little while.
Amen.

FOR BOYS

HEROISM

DEAR GOD, I know that the days of Ancient Knighthood are over, and I am glad that Your Love is bringing Peace to our World. So I cannot put on my Armor and fight with Lance and Sword or Rifle and Saber.

But, O God, teach me that I *can* be a True Hero just the same and also a *Fighter,* but that my battles will be of a nobler kind.

O God, give me the HELMET of *WISDOM,* and the SWORD of an *honorable* and *kind Gentleman;* the SHIELD of *Mercy* and *Justice,* and the BREASTPLATE of *Love* and *Patience.*

Teach me, O God, that calm Endurance is nobler than touchy resentment; that wise, Kind Words have more power than fierce self-justification, and that LOVE and TRUTH in my Heart are greater than pride and self-glory.

O God, give me a deep belief in all this and help me day by day so that I may always be a TRUE HERO. O God, guard the Life of a Boy.

AMEN.

HABITS

O GOD, You know the Heart of a Boy, and You know that it is like a New Garden, waiting for the Gardener to plant Good Seeds in it. You also know that the Garden Soil of my Young Heart may not see the difference between the Seeds of Good and Evil.

So, O God, plant the Seeds of Good Habits in my Heart. Make them to grow and flourish and bloom into GOOD all the days of my Life.

Teach me, O God, to form GOOD HABITS, and give them great strength, so that no Evil ones may grow in my Heart.

Please make it very plain to me that it is as hard to break a GOOD HABIT as a bad one. Show me that the more Good Habits I have, the less I will fail in my Life Work, for then the Habit of daily strength will always be mine.

O God, take care of my Boy's Heart. AMEN.

PATRIOTISM

O GOD, while I am young and when my Heart is open and ready to take in the *best* influences, I pray You to show me the meaning of True Patriotism.

Oh, fill my Heart with gratitude that I am the Son of a Freeborn Man. Teach me the meaning of Freedom. Teach me to respect the bright Flag of my Country, and make me feel a noble thrill of Pride when I see it spread abroad.

Teach me, O God, to revere the memory of my Forefathers who fought or died in the defense of Liberty and Equal Rights of all men. Give me a brave, a true Heart, O God, so that I may *live* as a true American Boy should live.

O God, bless my dear Land and make it stand first among all the Nations, upholding her Standard of Right, Truth, and Freedom.

While I am young, O God, give me the Heart of a true PATRIOT.

AMEN.

SELF-RELIANCE

O GOD, I am only a Boy and I have not grown up, either in Mind or Body. I need Your Help and Wisdom every day.

O God, please come into my Heart and live within call of my Mind, so that when I am *self-doubting* and do not know how to decide, or act in the *right* way, *Your* Love and Wisdom will be near, to guide and guard me.

O God, be the Good and Wise part of me, a Boy, so that I may use that Good and Wise Part of me in times of need. Then I will make no mistakes.

With Your Help, O God, I will learn SELF-RELIANCE. I will *think* nobly and keenly, without pride or harshness, and I will *act* wisely and quickly, without boastfulness or doing injury to others. Your Good shall grow in me day by day, so that I shall never doubt myself or fear to *act for myself;* and finally I shall be glad to do my Duty and proud to accept the Responsibilities of a SELF-RELIANT MAN.

AMEN.

SELF-CONTROL

DEAR GOD, when Anger or Resentment or Fear takes fast hold of me and tries to turn Goodness and Reason out of my Heart,—then, O God, help me.

Teach me *Self-Control.* Prove to my Mind that Anger leaves me weakened and less of a *Man* when it masters *me.* I pray that You will show me plainly that Resentment and Fear open the Doors of my Heart to many Evils that wait outside of me.

O God, I want to know and be very sure that if I *master* Evil that tries to *rule me,* I shall grow to be a brave and kind Master of Men.

Oh, help me to see that with *Self-Control* my wisdom shall be the best and my Thoughts the purest. And in the end, my Life shall be a Good Influence for Other Men and always full of Joy and Usefulness for myself. So, O God, teach me SELF-CONTROL.

AMEN.

FOR GIRLS

USEFULNESS

DEAR GOD, the Days of my life come and go, for You intended my life to be made of many Good Days. I pray of You, Dear God, to make each one of these days a Golden Time of Usefulness and kindly help to others.

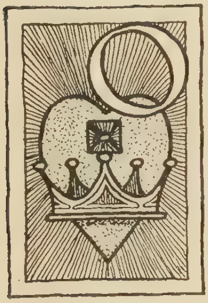
O God, guide my Life and bless my eyes, so that I can see that my busy Hands will give me a happy Heart and a clear-thinking Mind. With Your help my Heart will love my duty and my Mind will show me how to do it perfectly.

O God, lead me, so that I will go about my Home with my glad eyes open, so that I may see plainly what things are *best* to do; in this way I will prove that a little Girl may be *useful* in the *best* way.

O God, make my loving Heart and skillful Hands necessary to my Home, and O God, bless this Home of mine and all those who live in it. O God, help me, a Child, to be USEFUL and KIND.

AMEN.

PATIENCE



O GOD, my Life is very young, and my Heart and Mind see new and strange things each day. It is right that this should be, for You want me to learn and improve in Mind and Heart.

So, O God, come into my Heart and teach me gentle PATIENCE. Show me that I should control the quick fire in me that makes me *petulant* and *impatient*. Help me to see that each time I close my wise lips upon an impulsive tongue, I have won a VICTORY over *myself*.

Oh, help *me*, a little Girl, to be calm and thoughtful in manner when tried, and quiet in actions at all times.

O God, help me to see that PATIENCE will make me a true and noble *Woman*, who *must* win Love and Respect all the days of her good life. O God, give Your Love to me, a Child.

AMEN.

CHEERFULNESS

DEAR GOD, You give this World and all of us Children Love, Life, Joy, and Sunshine. You bless us with a great host of Good Things. O God, make me grateful for all this as I should be. Help me each day to show that I love the blessings You give to me, by being glad to live, glad to serve others, and glad to add *my* CHEERFULNESS to Your dear Blessings.

O God, help me, so that the Sunshine in my Heart will shine out from my happy eyes, and make more blessings in my Home.

Help me to always be cheerful in times of Work and Study; Watching and Waiting; Illness and Health. May my Cheerfulness be a light to those about me in days of darkness or sunshine, in sad days or glad days.

O God, keep Your Love ever in me, and so make the Heart of a little Girl a place of Sunshine and CHEERFULNESS.

AMEN.

TIDINESS

DEAR GOD, You made this World of ours very beautiful. The blue Sky and the green Grass-Fields are sweet and clean and good to look at. The Flowers You gave us are fragrant and pure and there is Order and Tidiness in all the work of Your kind hand.

O God, make me worthy of this goodness and order that is about me, so that I may be a sweet and pure part of it all.

Teach me, I pray You, to love the *look* and *feeling* of Tidiness in my Home, and oh, give me a pure Heart and skillful hands so that I can make things *tidy* and *orderly* about me.

Help me to be always clean and tidy about *myself,* for clean Hands go with a pure Heart and *Cleanliness* is a virtue You love to have near You and in the fair World You made for me. O God, teach me to *want* to be TIDY in all ways, for that will prove that my Heart is full of pure Thoughts and sweet Wishes. O God, bless my Home and all those beneath its roof.

AMEN.

THOUGHTFULNESS

O GOD, my Friend and Helper, look into my Heart and see if selfish *thoughtlessness* lives there. When I think only of *myself,* dear God, please forgive me and touch my Heart with Your Love, so that it will always be *thoughtful* of others.

Help me to see that I will be happier and better in every way, if I look *outside* of myself and *into* the lives of those about me. Oh, make me gentle and full of kind Thoughts.

Dear God, lead me by Your kind hand to the sides of those who need *my* help and kindness. Help me each day of my life to see plainly the *many* chances I have to be *thoughtful.*

O God, guide me, guard me and live in my Heart so that I may give loving THOUGHTFULNESS to others many times each day.

AMEN.

ANIMALS OF THE BIBLE, FOR LITTLE FOLK

THE ASS

THE ass (or donkey), as most of us know it, is a stupid, patient animal that needs a good deal of urging to keep it going at all. But the ass of Palestine, of which we often read in the Bible, was a strong, nimble animal, with plenty of spirit. Perhaps one reason for the difference may be that the ass is very sensitive to cold, and so it is happier and healthier in a warm climate than in a cold one. Another reason is that the Jews and Arabs took greater care of their asses, and prized them more than we do. They were as well groomed and fed as were the horses, and they grew to be fine, large animals. The ass of the East can trot and canter for hours without growing tired, and is specially useful for climbing hills. So handsome and large were the asses of Palestine, that rich people chose to ride on them, and people of high rank rode on pure white ones. We read of Abraham riding on an ass to Mount Moriah. All children know the story of Balaam's ass. How the prophet was riding to Moab in disobedience to God, and the angel of the Lord stood in his way with a drawn sword in his hand. Balaam did not see the angel, but the ass did and turned aside, and when Balaam struck her she spoke and rebuked him. Asses had an important part in the bringing of Saul, the first King of Israel, to the throne. The asses of Kish, Saul's father, had strayed, and he sent Saul with a servant to hunt for them. They went from place to place, but could find no trace of them. At last they came to the place where the prophet Samuel was living, and went to see if he could tell them where the lost asses were. Samuel had been looking out for Saul, because God had told him he was sending him the man he had chosen to be king. So before he let him go Samuel anointed him as king. But the greatest honor ever given to an ass was when the Lord Jesus rode up to Jerusalem on "a colt, the foal of an ass." As he rode in peaceful triumph, with the mother ass running beside, the people spread their garments in his way and shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

THE BEAR

THERE is a picture that shows a happy family party of bears, the mother and her two children playing, and the father coming to look on. What funny, clumsy-looking animals they are! Yet bears are in many respects wonderful and interesting. They are clever and happy-natured. Their sight, smell, and hearing are very keen, and so they can easily be taught and trained. It is natural for a bear to stand on his hind legs, as we sometimes see performing bears do. He usually stands like that when going to meet an enemy. The she-bears are very careful over their young ones, and they wash them with their tongues just as a cat washes her kittens. The Syrian bear, of which we read in the Bible, is usually quite easy-tempered, and is only fierce and cruel when wounded or attacked. He knows how strong he is, and so he is quite fearless, and an angry bear would be a very dangerous foe to meet. Chiefly is it fierce if its young ones are touched or stolen. Several times in the Bible the fury of a she-bear when robbed of her young is used as a picture to describe a very angry person. Once, when the prophet Elisha was going to a city called Bethel (the place where Jacob had his wonderful dream of the ladder that reached to heaven), some rude, foolish children came out and mocked and jeered at him, calling out, "Go up, thou baldhead; go up, thou baldhead"; and we read that two she-bears came out of a wood and killed forty-two of them. I once heard a boy making game of a poor, deformed cripple, and it reminded me of the children who mocked Elisha. He soon stopped and looked ashamed when I spoke to him, but I thought he must have been cruel-hearted to hurt the feelings of one who already had so much to bear. We should try to ease the burdens of such by kindness and sympathy, and never add to them by our unkindness. Before sin came into the world, the lion and bear could live and play with the sheep and cows; and in Isaiah xi. 6, 7, the prophet tells that in the glad reign of Christ, when sin is put away forever, "the cow and the bear shall again feed and lie down together."

THE CAMEL

WHAT queer heads, long necks, and strange ugly humps camels have! We seldom see one; but in the East, in Arabia, North Africa, and Western Asia, the camel is, and always has been, a familiar and useful animal. God has made him able to go without food or water for a long time, to travel at an easy pace over the hot, loose sand of the desert for many miles without feeling tired, and to carry on his strong back heavy loads. The Arabs call him "the ship of the desert." We read in the Bible, right from the beginning, of camels. We are told that Abraham was rich in camels. When Rebekah came to be the wife of Isaac, she rode on a camel. The men who bought Joseph from his cruel brothers took him on a camel to Egypt. When the Queen of Sheba came to see the wise King Solomon, she brought with her camels laden with spices to present to the King. And when the wise men followed the star all the way to Bethlehem to see Jesus, the new-born King, they came riding on camels. The camel shows the wisdom of the good Creator, who has made him just to suit the needs of the country to which he belongs.

THE CONY

THE little conies are in many respects, both in form and in habits, like hares and rabbits. They are rather smaller than rabbits, and are of a dull brown color. Their ears are much smaller than those of rabbits. It would not be possible to pick up a cony by its ears, as children often pick up their rabbits.

Conies are timid little creatures and weak, but they are very wise; for, knowing their weakness, they make their homes always in holes in high rocks.

There are three mentions of the cony in the Bible. The first is in Leviticus, where the cony was forbidden as food.

Then in Psalm civ. and in Proverbs xxx. we learn of God's provision for them, and the wisdom of the conies in making use of that provision.

If a foolish cony had said, "I am not going to stay hidden up here in the rocks," he would soon have learned his mistake through pain, and perhaps death.

But they are too wise to do this. Knowing how weak they are, they do not question it, but just cover their weakness with God's strength, and so are safe and strong.

THE COW AND HER CALF

ALL over the world the peaceful cow is to be found. We can hardly imagine how we should get on without the milk she gives us. It forms part of almost every meal we have, and so full of nourishment is it that it is possible for people to live entirely on it without anything else.

The first use of the milk is, of course, to feed the baby calves. But God gives the cow ever so much more milk than her calves need, so as to feed the men, women, and children, who also need its nourishment.

There are many different kinds of cows; some of them are larger and some more beautiful than others.

The ox was brought to America soon after our great continent was discovered. It settled down and did well here, and soon there were many of its kind in its new home.

The calf, a dainty little animal, is able to run about almost as soon as it is born, and no sight is prettier than that of calves running along by their mothers in the fields.

Cows, or "kine," as they are generally called there, are mentioned several times in the Bible.

In Genesis we read how Pharaoh had a strange dream, all about cows. The whole story is told in Genesis xli.

Another pretty story about cows is told us in I Samuel vi. God had allowed the Philistines to take and keep for a time the holy ark to punish the Israelites for their sins. But after a time he sent a plague among the Philistines, and they were frightened and made haste to send away the ark.

As none wanted to take it into the land of Israel, the Philistines thought of this plan:

They made a little cart and put the ark in it. Then they took the calves away from two cows and harnessed the cows to the cart and let them go and take it where they liked. And the cows, under the guidance of God, went straight into the land of Judah.

As the cows went, some reapers heard them lowing for their calves, and, looking up, they saw the strange sight.

They soon spread the good news that the ark had come back, and the people rejoiced with great joy, and they thanked God for having sent it back to Israel again.

Then they took the cows which had drawn the cart and offered them as a burnt offering to God.

DEER

MOST of us, perhaps, have seen tame deer. We have watched them feeding in parks, and have been interested in their coy, shy ways, and the timid glances of their soft brown eyes. But from this we can hardly picture them as they are in their natural free state, so swift and so graceful, "leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." The character of the deer is very gentle and loving. When the wise King Solomon wanted to describe a tender and true wife, he said, "Let her be as the loving hind and tender roe" (that is, as a male and female deer together). Sometimes men hunt the deer, for its flesh, called venison, is very good for food. When hunted, it runs for its life very quickly and for many miles; and, if it escapes from the hunter, it becomes, through fear and fatigue, very thirsty, and pants for water to drink. Once when David was far from Jerusalem in the wilderness, he became filled with a great longing to be able to go to God's temple with the other people to worship and praise the Lord. He thought and thought about it until he quite panted with longing, and he said, "As the hart (deer) panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." He longed for God and his house just as the thirsty, hunted deer panted for water. Nothing and none else could satisfy him. There is really a thirst in all of us for God. But some people think it isn't God they want, but money, or pleasure, or ease, and so they drink and are still thirsty. The Lord Jesus once said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." He meant little children too; and the living water that he gives is his Holy Spirit. Let us then go to him as the thirsty deer runs to the water-brook, and he will quench our thirst and make us strong and happy, and satisfied in his love.

THE ELEPHANT

Children are always interested in elephants. The strong yet gentle giants seem somehow to be our friends.

The elephant is one of the most marvelous of God's creatures. It is the biggest of all animals, and is most docile and intelligent.

Just think, for example, of all it can do with its trunk! It is so strong and so pliable that with it the elephant can raise heavy weights and swing them round on to its back; and yet it is so delicately sensitive that its owner can pick up with it a pin or a straw. The elephant can fill its trunk with water, and either squirt it on to an enemy or pour it down its own throat to quench its thirst.

There is no mention in the Bible of elephants as living in the Holy Land. But we read of ivory, which is got from the large tusks or teeth that grow on each side of the elephant's trunk.

When we marvel at the strength and gentleness and usefulness of the elephant, let us remind ourselves of how much more wonderful must the great God be who created him.

FOXES

The fox is a pretty little animal, very much like a dog with a bushy tail. But his nature is very different from that of our faithful, affectionate dogs. He is very sly and cunning. It is often said, "As cunning as a fox." He is also a terrible thief, and is fond of robbing the poultry-yard. In the Holy Land the foxes are specially fond of grapes; and so, as there are many vineyards, they do a great deal of mischief. There is a verse in the Song of Solomon that says: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." You can fancy for yourselves some of these mischievous little Foxes breaking into a vineyard where, if not caught, they would soon do serious damage. What a picture this is of how what we call "little sins" steal into our lives and spoil our characters! God wants us to bear the fruits of love, patience, industry, and truthfulness. But the little foxes of anger, impatience, idleness, and deceit are always trying to get into our hearts to spoil our fruit. We need to be constantly watching and praying, so that these little habits and sins may not fasten themselves on us and spoil our lives.

THE GOAT

The goat is sometimes called "the poor man's cow," because it yields very good milk, and costs much less than a cow both to buy and to feed. There are a great many different kinds of goats. Some have handsome, curious horns, some have long ears, some have heavy coats of valuable hair and wool. The skins of both goats and kids are very useful; goatskins were used to make the wineskins and water-bottles of which we so often read in the Bible. Goats are daring, independent animals, fond of climbing and getting on to mountain-peaks. Although under the care of one shepherd, the sheep and goats always keep apart from each other by night and day. It is never necessary to separate them, they separate themselves naturally. It was something like this that the Lord Jesus meant when he said that at the great day of judgment the wicked would be divided from the good, just as naturally as the sheep are separated from the goats. If we want in that day to be on the Judge's right hand, we must show now that we are his lambs and sheep by listening to the good shepherd's voice and following him.

A HEN AND HER CHICKENS

Such a sight as that of a mother hen with her chickens is one we all may have seen many times. Very likely many of my readers keep fowls in their own yards, and they know what fun it is to hunt for eggs. Of course, when the hens are shut up in a "run" it is easy enough to find the eggs; but when they are allowed to run in an orchard, for instance, they lay their eggs in all sorts of funny hiding-places.

What a wonderful thing an egg—such as we can buy and eat as an ordinary relish—is! In many of them there is the wonderful germ of life. In the springtime, when the hens are laying a great many eggs, about twelve or fifteen will be placed in a basket filled with straw. When the hen sees this she is much pleased, and, spreading out her wings, she sits on the basket and keeps the eggs warm. After she has sat like this for three weeks the shells begin to crack, and the proud hen then knows that the chickens inside are full-grown and are wanting to get out. Bit by bit the opening in the shell gets larger, and soon out steps a dear little chick. Doesn't it seem just like a fairy tale?

Then the hen is at her best. She is a perfect mother, she follows her children about, calls them to her if they stray away, and finds food for them. If danger of any kind threatens, she gathers them quickly and hides them all safely under her wings. So completely does she hide them, that a whole brood may be nestling under one hen, and not a feather or beak of one chick be seen.

One day the Lord Jesus was thinking sadly about the ruin that was soon to come upon Jerusalem. Though God had been so good to the Jews, and had given them so many blessings, they had been constantly wicked and ungrateful to him, and now a dreadful punishment was coming upon them. And as Jesus looked on the beautiful city so soon to be destroyed, his heart was sad with pity and sorrow, and he said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *but ye would not!*"

HORSE AND COLT

Of all the wonderful and beautiful animals to be found in the world, there is none more perfect than a well-bred horse—so strong and capable, and yet so obedient that he will obey even the guiding hand of a child. In shape, in movement, and in character he is one of the great Creator's masterpieces.

And of all horses the Arabian or "Arab steed" is the most perfect, both as to beauty and intelligence.

An Arab loves his horse and treats him as his friend and comrade. He would rather lose anything than part with his horse.

When an Arab colt is born, it is loved and cared for by the whole family of its owner, and so it grows up in a little world of love.

In the Book of Job there is a grand description of a charger or war-horse. They are the words of God himself; they begin with the question to Job, "Hast thou given the horse his strength?" Read it for yourselves in Job xxxix. verses 20–25, and you will almost be able to fancy you can see the noble charger fearlessly carrying his armed rider straight into the thick of the battle. As you read, and whenever you admire a beautiful horse, remember that all his strength and beauty is God's handiwork.

THE LEOPARD

When you see a picture of a leopard, it may remind you of a big, handsome tortoise-shell cat. But if you were to meet one it would not be safe to stroke his back as we do those of our own pussies.

The leopard is one of the fiercest of all animals. He makes his home in the middle of the wildest forests, and hunting him is a difficult and dangerous sport.

He is like a cat in his soft, sly, swift movements, and in the way he climbs trees.

His coat is a deep, yellowish-brown color, speckled with large dark spots.

Once the prophet Jeremiah was trying to show the people how serious a matter it was to keep on doing wrong things, because by this they were forming bad habits, and habits help to make the character of a person. Jeremiah told the people that the habits had become as much a part of themselves as the spots on the leopard's back were a part of the leopard.

But, though we cannot break our own chains, God can do it for us, and he is willing to help us to break off bad habits and form good ones; and he is able also to cleanse away the spots of sin and make our hearts whiter than snow.

THE LION

The lion is called "the king of beasts" because of his great dignity and power. He holds his beautiful head well up, and walks with a slow and stately tread, and all other animals fear him. The lioness is very fond of her mate, and if he is attacked defends him. She takes the greatest care of her babies, or cubs. A new-born cub is about the size of a small cat, and it is not able to walk till it is two months old. The lion is mentioned in the Bible about one hundred and thirty times. Sometimes his noble qualities are shown, and sometimes those that are cruel. We are told that when Daniel was put in the lions' den, God shut the lions' mouths; showing that though the lion was king of beasts, God was King of lions. The Lord Jesus is called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah"; teaching us that while Judah was Israel's royal tribe, Jesus was the King of the Jews.

The devil is called "a roaring lion." When we hear his roar and feel tempted to do what is wrong, let us remember that the only way to overcome him and his temptations is to resist them with "the sword of the Spirit, the word of God."

THE OSTRICH

Most of us have often seen and admired ostrich-feathers, but not so many of us have seen the big handsome bird on whose body they grow. The chief home of the ostrich is in Central Africa. They are very strong, big creatures. They run more quickly than the swiftest horse. One Egyptian king had a team of ostriches to draw his chariot.

These strange birds are noted for their large appetites. They can eat anything they come across—even such things as stones, metal, glass, etc., without suffering from indigestion.

They have a curious habit of building their nests in the sand. Because of this, people used to think the ostrich was a careless mother, but this is not really so, for she watches her nest carefully, and she hardly leaves her young ones until they are old enough to take care of themselves.

In the Book of Job, chapter xxxix. 13, we read that one of the questions Elihu asked Job was, Who gave wings and feathers to the ostrich? He was reminding him of the truth we often sing, that—

"All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The good God made them all."

OXEN

Cows and bullocks are quite familiar friends to us. In the hot summer weather they make a pretty picture lying peacefully chewing the cud under shady trees, or standing in the cool waters of some gently flowing brook. We sometimes see them drawing the plow across the brown earth to prepare it for the seed. Oxen are used for many farm purposes in many countries. In Palestine the Jews and Arabs used them much as we should use horses. They drew the plow, they trod out the corn, they were harnessed to wagons, and they carried burdens. Besides their use for work when alive and for food when killed, oxen were offered in sacrifice to God, and their shed blood was just a type or picture of the great sacrifice of Christ, who was to die for the sin of the whole world. There are many allusions to oxen in the Bible. Elisha was plowing with a great team of twenty-four oxen in front of him when Elijah passed and cast his prophet's mantle on him. One of the excuses made by an invited guest in our Lord's parable of the Marriage Feast was, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them." There is a verse in Deuteronomy which shows God's tender care for the useful, patient ox. The Lord told Moses that when the ox was put to tread out the corn his mouth was not to be muzzled, so that while he worked he could eat, if hungry. Let us always remember this, and try to make the lives of dumb animals as easy and happy as we can. You know that when oxen are used to draw a plow the heads of two are put through a frame made of wood, called a yoke. This keeps them together, and makes it easier for them to draw the heavy plow. This is what the Lord Jesus meant when he said, "Take my yoke upon you. . . . My yoke is easy and my burden is light." If we yield our hearts and wills to him we shall find that duty becomes pleasure, and even hard and unpleasant tasks lose all their drudgery.

THE RAVEN

Ravens, crows, magpies, and jackdaws all belong to the same family, though, like members of other families, they are not exactly alike.

The raven is a big black bird, with a very harsh, unpleasant voice. Black hair is often described as "raven-black," and a person suffering from hoarseness will say, "I am as hoarse as a raven."

They are very clever, intelligent birds, and can imitate in a wonderful way. But they are very cunning and mischievous, and it is as well to be on friendly terms with them, for they are very spiteful enemies.

Some people have pet ravens. If taken quite young they can be easily tamed and taught all kind of things, and they make very amusing pets; though it is always wise to keep an eye on them, or there is no telling what mischief they will get up to.

In the Bible we find twice special mention made of the doings of ravens. One is in Genesis i., where we read that after the dreadful flood of water (which God sent to punish people for their sins) had been on the earth for six weeks, Noah one day opened a little window of the ark and let a raven fly out. Nothing was then to be seen but water. But ravens can keep on flying for a long time without getting tired, so Noah's

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SHEPHERDS OF TO-DAY IN THE FIELDS NEAR BETHLEHEM.

MODERN TRADERS IN ASSES, CAMELS, AND CATTLE AT THE POOL OF GIHON, JERUSALEM.

raven just flew to and fro, resting if necessary on the ark, until the water was all dried up from the earth, and Noah and his family and all the animals and birds also came out upon dry land.

The other raven story is told us in I Kings xvii. The Lord was going to send a famine upon the land (this meant that there would be very little food for man or beast), because his people kept doing what was wrong. But he did not want his faithful servant Elijah to suffer; and so he told him to go and stay by a brook so that he might have water to drink, and he would provide him with food.

So the prophet trusted God, and he went to the brook of which the Lord had told him, and waited for the promised food. And the little messengers who brought him his breakfast and supper every day were just some of these clever black ravens of which we have been thinking.

So we see that the birds recognize God as their Lord and do his will.

SHEEP

Sheep are interesting for what they give us rather than for what they are. They are among the silliest of all animals, so very different from dogs and horses, for instance.

If we watch a flock of sheep, we can easily see how they seem to have no minds of their own, but each one follows the rest. They need to be very carefully looked after, because they don't know how to take care of themselves. If they get into danger, they seem to have no wits to guide them out of it again. This is why it is so important to place them under the care of a wise and kind shepherd.

The whole of a sheep is useful and valuable.

We know how much is done with its thick, soft wool; how it is cut off and washed and woven into warm garments and blankets.

And we know, too, how useful its flesh is as mutton. Indeed, I don't know how we should get on without the useful sheep.

Those found in different countries differ from each other in appearance. I have seen some from Africa with mixed brown and white wool, and such long, thick tails, very unlike our white short-tailed sheep. In Syria, the land of the Bible, the sheep are very like the African ones. We are told that their long thick tails sometimes weigh from ten to fifteen pounds.

Over and over again we read in the Bible of sheep, how they were to be offered as sacrifice to God, and were to be eaten as food by men.

Then we read of many people who kept sheep —Jacob, Joseph, David, and many others. Even when David became king he never forgot the days when he watched the sheep on the hillsides of Bethlehem and the lessons he learned then. We all know the beautiful psalm he composed, beginning, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

David saw things around him with two pairs of eyes: the eyes of his body and the eyes of his spirit. So while with one pair he watched his sheep, with the other pair he saw that he was one of the Lord's sheep, and that under the care of his good shepherd he was quite safe and happy.

We all possess these two pairs of eyes, but with many of us our spirit-eyes need to be opened. Let us pray "Open thou mine eyes," and then, when we see sheep, we, like David, shall remember that we have a good shepherd who even laid down his life for his sheep, and we shall rejoice to follow and obey him.

TURTLE-DOVES

All doves and pigeons belong to the same family. Children who keep them become quite wise in telling one variety from another, but to most of us they all look very much alike, at any rate in form. In our English Bible they are called doves.

The turtle-doves of Palestine can never be tamed. If put into a cage, they at once begin to droop and pine. But if set at liberty, they fly swiftly back to their home in the clefts of the rocks. Once, when David was surrounded by enemies and was in great distress, he envied these homing doves, and said: "Oh that I had wings as a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest!"

We remember, too, when the mother of Jesus took the holy babe in her arms and went up to the temple to present him to the Lord, she took, as was the custom when the offerer was a poor woman, "a pair of turtle-doves" as a sacrifice.

But the greatest honor ever given to this gentle, loving, and beautiful bird was when the Holy Spirit chose the form of a dove when he came from heaven on the occasion of the Saviour's baptism, and rested upon his head. This is why in our hymns we sing of the Holy Spirit as the "Heavenly Dove."

THE WILD BOAR

This rather handsome though pig-like animal does belong to the pig family, but is very different in nature and habits from those that grunt contentedly in our pigsties, and whose flesh supplies us with pork and bacon.

The bodies of wild boars are covered with stiff hairs called bristles. They have long snouts or noses, which they find useful for other purposes besides that of smelling. They use them as spades with which to dig holes in the ground, and with them they burrow down very deep into the earth in search of worms and grubs, which they eat.

Wild boars are not fond of cities; they prefer to roam in big, dense forests, and are plentiful in many countries where such forests are to be found.

They are terribly destructive if they happen to choose a cultivated field in their search for food. With their snouts they will root it all up in a single night. They go in a straight line right across the field, and the width of the burrowed path is just the width of the boar's head, so that if a boar-hunter comes across one of these tracks, he can tell just how big the boar is that has made it.

The Psalmist was reminded of this habit of the boar when he looked upon the troubles that had come upon his fellow-countrymen, the Jews. (See Psalm lxxx. 13.) He likened Israel to a beautiful vine that God had transplanted from Egypt to Canaan. Under his fostering care it had grown and flourished and spread until all the hills had been covered with vineyards, which had sprung from the central vine. But now all was changed. The beauty of the vine had vanished, and the wild boar out of the forest was tearing up its roots. Then the Psalmist prayed that the great owner of the vineyard would visit his vineyard, drive away the destructive boars, and restore the dying vine.

If he is captured when very young, the boar can be easily tamed. He becomes then warmly attached to his owner, and responds to his kindness with real affection.

Although, like their homely relations the pigs, they are fond of rolling in the mud, boars are really particular about their personal cleanliness, and they always take a bath in a brook or stream before going to their lairs for rest.

THE WOLF

The thought of a wolf always brings with it a shiver of fear. People who live in or travel through countries where wolves abound, tell tales of peril which, while they fascinate us, make us feel thankful if our home is in a land where a wolf's howl is never heard.

At first sight the wolf is so like his relative the dog, which is our loved and trusted friend and companion, that we can hardly believe he deserves the bad name he has. But the wolf is unlike the faithful dog in everything but his shape. In character he is crafty, greedy, and cruel. The old story of "Little Red Riding Hood," that every child knows, shows the wolf in his true character, pretending to be good and kind, but all the time waiting his chance to do a cruel thing.

Wolves are most dangerous and fierce in cold countries, when unable through frost and cold to get food.

Many times in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, are wolves mentioned, but almost always it is as a picture to describe the ways and characters of cruel, crafty people.

The wolf looks upon sheep as its special prey, and woe betide the flock if it has a careless shepherd when a wolf steals into the fold! Once the Lord Jesus was describing the loving care which he, as the good shepherd, took of his sheep, and he compared the unfaithful priests to the hirelings who did not own and therefore did not care for the sheep, but let the wolves of sin and error steal into the fold and destroy the flock.

How different from the way our good shepherd acted! He not only faced the wolves, but he laid down his life for his sheep.

There is a beautiful verse in Isaiah xi. 6, which paints us a wonderful picture of the good time coming, when all sin and suffering shall come to an end, when all quarrels shall cease, and love shall fill all hearts and rule all lives, because the Lord Jesus is the crowned King of the world, and Satan's reign is over.

This is how the prophet described that happy time: "The wolf shall dwell (that means shall live happily in peace and love) with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." And all that blessed peace to be because "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord."

THE HOMELAND OF JESUS

CHILD LIFE AND MANNERS AND CUSTOMS IN THE HOLY LAND TO-DAY

LIFE AND SCENES IN PALESTINE TO-DAY

It is daybreak, the seventh we have seen on the Mediterranean since we left Marseilles on our way eastward. We can just make out, in the dazzling glory of the sun's rays, the faint outline of the country we have come to see.

It is a little country, no bigger than the State of New Hampshire, but there is much to see in it, so long is its story, thousands of years long, so full is its story, full of the most wonderful things that have ever happened in the world. Countless numbers of people have made their way across land and sea to visit this country, and many of them know more about it than about their native lands; for the names of its mountains, of its rivers and lakes, of its cities and villages, nay, of its very caves and pools and rocks, have been household words in the mouths of millions through the centuries.

Why this world-wide interest? What do we all come to see? It is not on account of scenery, though there is much that is glorious. It is not by any means chiefly on account of the absorbing interest of the very far past, though it is fine indeed to pass over the most ancient roads in the world, to see the home of the greatest sailors and traders of old times, to read the records of the journeys to and fro of mighty kings and their armies from either side of the little country of Palestine.

It is the magic of its name as the Holy Land that has drawn, and still draws, thousands and tens of thousands of pilgrims to visit it. Palestine is a holy land to the Jews, for in it is the site of the temple, and the scenes of the Old Testament stories lie scattered over its surface. There are the valleys and fields where Abraham pitched his tents, there are the tombs where the great ones of Israel were buried, there is the mountain-top from which Moses saw the Promised Land he might not enter, and here are the green pastures and still waters where David led his flock.

Palestine is a holy land to the followers of Mohammed, for they too reverence the heroes of Old Testament history. And their Caliph Omar, the second in succession to Mohammed, is associated with great and magnificent buildings on the site of the Jewish temple, second only to Mecca in sacredness.

To Christians Palestine is a holy land because our Master passed the thirty-three years of his life on earth within its borders.

Our landing-place is Jaffa, and here we get our first view of an Eastern town. Such a confusion of strange-looking faces and costumes! Camels striding along the streets; numbers of donkeys and their boys; mean-looking houses, much dirt, and many beggars—all this passes before our eyes as we make for the railway station, crossing one of the most ancient roads in the world, by the sea-plain, leading from the Nile to the upper part of the Euphrates.

We have a three-hours' journey before us, though the distance is less than fifty miles. First through orange and lemon groves, then across a plain famous through the ages for the beauty of its wild flowers, then winding among low hills, past shepherd-boys with their sheep and goats, past mud villages set in fields of yellow, brown, and green. The train begins to mount as the trains do up the heights of Switzerland, and from the open platform we enjoy the growing grandeur of the view, backward over the Mediterranean, forward to the heights above, as we climb to the great central ridge that forms the heart of Palestine.

Soon our train runs into the terminus, and amid the bustle of porters and luggage; and finding a carriage to take us to our hotel, we look up and read on the station wall JERUSALEM. Surely we are in a dream, thus to approach a place that so far has belonged to the hymns we sing, to the Bible stories we love, to the visions of heavenly joy. But no, we are actually here, in sight of the walls, the gates, the towers, and buildings. It is indeed bewildering at first—such steep, narrow streets, sometimes mere flights of steps. And what a motley crowd! Monks in black or white habits, sisters of mercy, black watchmen, Arabs in striped clothing, veiled ladies, visitors and pilgrims from all over Europe and Asia, all pass in rapid succession. And here are the loaded camels again, jingling their bells as they plod by, and donkeys with yelling boys everywhere.

We start our pilgrimage in the Christian quarter, being anxious to see at once the famous mass of buildings raised over what are supposed to be the spots where Jesus suffered and was buried, now called the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. We can never forget the moment of entering; we seem to leave our everyday beings outside as we pass the Mohammedan guardian of the peace, into a dim, mysterious darkness, cloudy with incense, and pierced with a multitude of glowing lamps. As we go through the various churches and chapels belonging to the Greek, Latin, Armenian, and Coptic churches, we hear a constant hum of prayers and litanies, drowned from time to time by the rolling of an organ, the clash of a cymbal. We grow quite dazed as we are taken from site to site, and are told that here our Saviour was crowned with thorns, here he was nailed to the cross.

There he was buried. How can there be so much certainty about it, we reflect. Helena's chair and chapel remind us of the dream of the Empress, by which she is said to have been guided to find the true cross on this spot. That was three centuries after Christ's death and the awful destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans some years later, and during those centuries neither Jew nor Christian came to this place, and men's memories grew dim about the exact position of the spots where Jesus suffered. Helena's beautiful church was destroyed by the Persians, and many were the buildings and additions, many were the fires, many were the fierce fights raging round, through the crusading times and onward.

We feel it a welcome relief to pass out to the open air from the crowded buildings, churches, convents, galleries, altars, rival sects, and to make our way by the Damascus Gate to a remarkably shaped mound, with bare limestone cliffs. It can indeed be seen from "afar off," and there must have been many "passers-by" near this little Hill of Execution, where two ancient main roads cross.

Not far from this spot, which many believe to be the true Calvary, is a quiet garden, lately cleared from rubbish and set in order. With deep interest we look at the tombs in the garden, especially at one that answers to one described in the Gospels. We feel that it is this mound, this garden tomb, we shall bear in mind when we are at home again singing of the "green hill far away, without a city wall" rather than the far-famed, much-fought-for sites revealed by the dream of Helena, which are now under the buildings of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Next day comes our visit to Bethlehem. It is an easy drive, five miles to the south of Jerusalem. The Field of the Shepherds attracts us first; we only wish that we could have been in it at night, under the brilliant starlit sky. As it is, we enjoy the sunshine on the fields where Ruth gleaned after the reapers of Boaz, on the shining white buildings of the little city standing out against the blue sky, on the broad plain stretching to the Dead Sea, with the purple mountains of Moab gleaming in the distance.

Foremost among the sights of Bethlehem stands out the large and simple Church of the Nativity, whose building was begun about 1600 years ago over the spot where Christ was born.

The little inn in which Mary and Joseph sought shelter was on the old caravan route, and no doubt the stable to which they were turned was in a rocky cave close by, as many inn stables are seen to-day. The rocky cave-stable said to be the one is now a shrine lined with marble, lit by lamps burning night and day, supplied by the different churches that have shares in the various parts of the building. We stoop to read the inscription round the silver star on the floor: "Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary."

Turkish soldiers keep guard, as in Jerusalem, to prevent the followers of the Prince of Peace flying at each others' throats over a few inches of a wall or altar! It has been said that more than once the question of the opening or shutting of a door in the churches and convents that have clustered round the ancient church has well-nigh involved Europe in war.

Our next pilgrimage takes us farther afield from Jerusalem, two days' traveling in a carriage, some of it over very rough roads. We start early, out by the Damascus Gate, winding past the Garden Tomb, across the brook Kedron, past the Garden of Gethsemane to the slopes of Olivet. Jerusalem looks lovely in the morning sun, over the steep valley dotted with Jewish graves. Above the striking city walls we see the greenish luster of the wonderful dome built over the temple site, and the towers and spires all crowded against the sky. Bethany is close at hand in a hollow. The supposed sites of the tomb of Lazarus and the home of Mary and Martha are shown in the village, but we are content to stand on the edge of the hollow, and imagine ourselves gazing with Mary down the mountain, watching and longing for her great friend in her sore trouble. The view onward is fine, in the clear, bright air; was it here that the words were spoken, "I am the resurrection and the life," the words still echoing down the years to comfort those who have lost their dear ones?

And now we go down, down, down to the Jordan valley, by zigzag roads as in Swiss mountain passes. It is a steep drop from the heights of Jerusalem, and we get many views of the wonderful deep valley in which the Jordan winds on its way from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. The distance between the seas, as the crow flies, is only seventy miles, but so great are the windings of the Jordan that its course is nearly three times as long. There is a beautiful harmony between the green of the willows and rushes, that border the river, and the blue of the calm Dead Sea. It is a hot, rough journey as we near the sea, over a mere track among little mounds of mud, and low scrubby bushes that serve as food for camels.

Greatly do we enjoy a rest on the pebbly beach, and still more a bath in the far-famed salt water, seven times salter than the ocean. This saltness is realized when we get a drop in our eyes or mouth. We feel ourselves so light in the Dead Sea that we simply stand upright when out of our depth and tread water. We find it best to swim on our backs, as it is not easy to keep our arms and legs under water.

Invigorating as it is, we are glad of a dip later in the fresh water of the Jordan to wash off the salt that has dried on our skin. We lunch under the green trees by the river, and listen to the stories of our guide about the thousands of pilgrims, chiefly Russians, who come to bathe in the waters of Jordan, the river crossed by the children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land; the river in which John baptized his Master. We seem to see the happy, merry folk, so simple and kindly, so enthusiastic about all they see and hear. They carry away the garments, wet with Jordan water, and keep them to be buried in, for this pilgrimage is the event of their lives.

We spend the night at Jericho, the lowest inhabited spot in the world. Nearly all the course of the Jordan is below the level of the sea; the surface of the Dead Sea is nearly 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The Old Testament Jericho, so wonderfully besieged and taken, and the New Testament Jericho, where blind Bartimæus begged, and Zacchæus collected taxes, are both marked now by rubbish-heaps and ruins. It is on the site of the Jericho of crusading times that the modern village stands, surrounded by gardens and groves of fruit-trees.

It is a long climb back to Jerusalem. The pilgrims do it on foot; so did the multitudes who went out to hear and see the Baptist by the Jordan.

Before starting for Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee, we must visit the southeast part of Jerusalem, where the famous temple of Solomon stood. The site is now covered by magnificent Mohammedan buildings and courts. Some think that the rock on its highest point, which is covered by the Dome of the Rock, was the Altar of Burnt Offering. We are amazed at the magnificence in form and decoration of this shrine, to enter which we take off our shoes. Such blue Persian tiles and mosaic glass; such beautiful arches and pillars and soft carpets! The El-Aksa Mosque—El-Aksa means "the most distant"—the farthest sacred shrine from Mecca, stands about 500 feet away from the Dome of the Rock. It was first a Christian cathedral, but was changed by Omar into a mosque. We linger as long as we can over the view from the walls, and the endless points of interest and beauty which it contains.

Our last sight in Jerusalem has a haunting sadness. Thousands of Jews are gathering now in the country that once belonged to their forefathers, which they still love with a passionate patriotism. On certain days a most affecting service is held beside a part of the wall surrounding the temple enclosure, a part believed to date from Solomon's time. With faces pressed against the huge stones, the Jews bewail the lost glories of their temple and country, and pray and read the Hebrew Scriptures with the tears streaming down their faces.

And now begins the most adventurous part of our journey. We might do it easily by taking train from Jerusalem back to Jaffa, thence fifty miles northward by steamer to Haifa, and then by carriage to Nazareth. But for many reasons —chiefest that we want to *live* in the great past, see the views that Jesus saw, see the peasants as he saw them—we decide to take the land journey by carriage to Nablus, and then to Nazareth on horseback.

It is a wonderful farewell view we get of Jerusalem as we mount the hill to the north and look back at the panorama; and then all day long we pass over rough hills and beautiful valleys, over rocky passes with bright streams, over fertile fields. With bewildering rapidity we leave behind us sites connected with David, Samuel, Eli, Joshua and his followers. We sleep at Nablus, the old city of Shechem, the first city (Sichem) mentioned in the Bible. Here live the remnant—only some two hundred poor folk—of the old Samaritans, and in their interesting synagogue we see the famous and ancient roll of the books of Moses and Joshua.

The Vale of Shechem is grandly walled in by two mountains, one dry and bare, with masses of prickly pear, the other, at its base, clothed with lovely flowers and shrubs, and gay with leaping brooks. We turn aside to see Jacob's Well, where Christ, weary with the heat, sat and rested and talked with the woman of Samaria. It is hard riding next day, but our Arab steeds bring us safely through, with guides and attendant horsemen to look after us.

The kings of Israel did indeed find a grand site for their new capital, towering on its lonely hill, rising from broad and fertile plains. We take in as much as we can of the position of Ahab's ivory palace, of the ruins of the grand colonnade, of the magnificent views all round. What wild and stirring scenes once raged where now sad ruin and desolation brood over the Hill of Samaria! Presently our way takes us across the Vale of Dothan, and as we go we live again in the familiar story of Joseph, and watch the dreamer coming over the fields to his brothers. We shudder at their treatment of the boy as we look into the old rock-cut, bottle-shaped cisterns, into one of which he may have been let down; and in that cloud of dust out yonder we almost fancy we can see the caravan of Ishmaelites to whom he was sold, traveling on the ancient highway we are crossing. It is still a principal trade route between the Euphrates and Egypt.

As we cross the plain of Esdraelon we realize that we are in the very heart of a great battlefield where men have striven with each other from the times of Sisera to those of Napoleon.

As the eventful day closes, the last ridge is crossed and we are at Nazareth.

Next day we spend some happy hours among the rocky fields around, picking the "lilies of the field," watching the birds, and the boys tending sheep and goats. Things change here so little through the centuries that we have little difficulty in seeing them as they were 2000 years ago. Here are women grinding at the mill, travelers in flowing garments, with scrip and staff, oxen plowing, people living on the housetops, men carrying water in bottles made of the skins of animals. Our chief interest in Nazareth is to watch the mothers and children at the well, now called the Virgin's Well, in memory of the days when Mary came to it with her pitcher, holding her little Son by the hand.

Next day the carriage takes us on past Cana and the Hill of Blessings, and then at last we look down on the blue and sparkling Sea of Galilee, ringed round with green hills. We greatly enjoy a sail on the lake, seeing the spot where the Jordan enters strong and full into it, and noting on its shores the ruins of the old towns with familiar names that were dotted about it in the time of Christ. Ships and boats were busy then on its waters, plying from one to the other; the fishermen, too, had good markets for their abundant hauls of fish. In the early morning, next day, we cross it again from Tiberias, and amid the quiet ripple of the little waves we think of the scenes on its shores, of the storms, of the words borne across the water, "It is I, be not afraid."

From Semakh we take the train to Damascus, a journey of a few hours. Such varied scenery we pass, picturesque river-valleys, pools of hot sulphur, bare plains dotted with the mounds of buried cities, and fine views from time to time of the snowy giant Mount Hermon, whence springs the Jordan. The last part of the way is over the Damascus-Mecca Railway, by which thousands of pilgrims now travel toward the birthplace of Mohammed. The buildings of the city, of a pearly gray color, surrounded by thousands of the greenest trees, have gained for it the name of the "pearl set in emeralds." It is also called the Immortal City, the oldest city in the world, for Damascus was full of people, thriving and beautiful, long ages before Rome was born.

We feel we would like many weeks, instead of days, in which to wander by the two rivers that "make" the fertile site of Damascus. In the bazaars we are delighted with things old and new which show the skill of the people from early days in metal and leather work and in beautiful damask linen and hangings.

But we must tear ourselves away to visit the Great Mosque, for about it hangs the story of the lovely city from the days when Naaman, the Syrian captain, gained permission to bow himself in the House of Rimmon, and onward through Roman and Christian times.

It is but a short journey by train to visit the grand ruins of the Temple of the Sun and of Bacchus, and the stupendous quarries of stone at Baalbek, in the plain between the two Lebanon ranges. Columns are still standing 90 feet high, immense flights of steps are still to be seen, and remains of huge terraces and walls.

By the old road that leads from Baalbek to the cedars of Lebanon, the traveler has to climb a pass 8000 feet above the level of the sea, whence the view is superb, over snowy peaks, over mountain streams and valleys, far away to the Mediterranean on the one side and to the desolate distant ridges on the other. The cedars, grand and dreary as they are, some of them perhaps 2000 or

3000 years old, are but a remnant of the forests so famous in the days of Solomon.

But we have to take the train from Baalbek to the port of Beirut, across the Lebanon range, and a most beautiful journey it is. The highest point is nearly 5000 feet above the sea, and the railway descends in zigzags through pine-forests. As we look out from the train, we think we have seen nothing more beautiful in all our tour than the views over the Mediterranean in the afternoon sun.

We approached the Holy Land in the golden haze of sunrise; we leave it in shadow as we face the setting sun.

IN A PEASANT HOME OF THE HOLY LAND

The house of a peasant in the Holy Land is a very simple affair. As a rule it consists of one large room, part of which is occupied by the family, and part by the animals which they own. The materials of which the house is built depend upon the neighborhood. In the hills there is plenty of stone, and in the plains there is plenty of earth; so in the one case the walls are of stone, in the other of mud.

The peasant of the plains can also obtain timber as well as earth, so that when he has raised his low red walls, he lays long beams across from wall to wall and forms a flat roof. Upon the beams earth is again spread thickly and trodden hard. In the springtime a crop of rich grass will rise upon these earthen roofs, and the goats soon find their way up, and pasture at ease on the housetop.

The peasant of the hills finds building a much more difficult affair. Stone is heavier and slower to build with than mud, and he has to make his walls very stout and strong on account of his roof. On the bare and sterile mountains he would search for timber in vain, and for the roof he must use the stone which lies to his hand in such abundance. So when the four walls are built, the structure is finished with a dome-shaped roof of stone. Such a roof throws great strain on the walls, and the latter are made three or four feet thick to withstand the pressure.

It is best to build such a roof quickly, in order that the stones may lock together and set firmly in a short time. So that when the builder has formed a framework on which the dome is to be laid, all his friends come to his aid, carrying up stones and mortar to the masons, who lay the dome with great speed. In this way a large roof is often built in a few hours. After about a week the framework is removed, and it is found that the dome has settled into its place with its stones bound together in the most solid fashion.

The day when a roof is built always closes with a great merrymaking. This is the return which the owner makes for the help of his neighbors: in the evening he provides them with a feast, and this break in the monotony of village life is greatly enjoyed. The feasters laugh, sing, shout, and clap their hands, and the village is filled with the merriest uproar.

The raising of the dome does not complete the house, for the finished roof, like that of all Eastern houses, is always flat. The walls are again carried up above the dome, and the latter is covered with earth and rubble trodden or beaten hard, and the whole made flush with the walls, giving the usual flat roof.

The inside of this peasant home, then, consists of one large room, but of this room about three-quarters of the space is raised and reached by one or more steps. This portion is called the mustabeh, and here the family live, while in the lower portion are stabled the horse, the cow, the donkey, and the goats.

At one side of the mustabeh is a hearth, and sometimes there is a chimney, but not always, and then the smoke has to find its way out at the door. There may be a small opening or window high up in the wall to form another vent, but this is not always found. In the more unsafe parts of the country such a window would afford opportunity for an enemy to fire into the room, so the only opening is the doorway, which can be strongly barricaded by a door formed of heavy planks.

The furnishing of the mustabeh is a very easy business, for, in our sense of the word, there is no furnishing at all. The peasant's home does not contain a single chair, table, bench, or bedstead; it contains some jars, some pots and pans, some cooking utensils, some bins for storing supplies, and that is all, save the bedding and a few mats. The mats are made of grass or rushes, and are spread upon the floor for the people to sit on; of the bedding there is no sign by day. But when night comes the housewife goes to a recess formed in the wall, and drags out a mattress three or four inches thick, filled with wool or rags. She lays this on the floor, and then fetches from the same recess two or three thick wadded quilts and some pillows stuffed with straw. This is the whole provision for sleeping, and it is rolled up and put away again in the morning.

In a row at one end of the mustabeh are the bins, made of clay, in which the peasant stores his supplies of wheat, dried figs, lentils, and other products of his land. The bins are large, for they are meant to hold the harvest of the year, and they are made by the women. When the women need a new bin, they seek some bed of tough clay and dig up a quantity. The clay is thoroughly broken up and soaked with water, and then crushed straw is well worked into it with the hands. The clay and straw form a very tenacious mass, and with this material the wheat-bin is built.

Only a small portion is built up each day, the new part being allowed to set firmly on the old before more is added. If the work went on too fast, the upper part would become too heavy for the soft lower part and would break away. We see exactly the same method followed by the swallow, who builds her nest of mud against our eaves, and lets one layer become hard and firm before she adds the next.

When the bin is finished it is left in the powerful Syrian sun to bake hard, and is then carried into the house. Near the bottom of the bin a small hole is left, from which the contents are drawn as needed. In some parts of the Holy Land very large bins are built in the house itself. A framework of posts and reeds is set up, and this framework is then plastered with mud or clay. Such a bin will hold a great amount of grain, and it is thought that these bins were the "barns" spoken of in the Bible, for the barn, as we see it in our country, is not known in the Holy Land.

After the bins the most important articles are the jars in which water, oil, and honey are stored. The oil is pressed from the olive, and is used largely in cooking food. Then come the wooden bowls in which bread is mixed and meals are served, wicker baskets in which all kinds of things are carried, and finally the mill in which corn is ground.

The mill ought, perhaps, to have come first, not last, for it is the one thing which cannot be spared out of the house. Without it bread could not be made, and people would starve, and its importance is recognized in the Old Testament law, which forbade a creditor to take a millstone in pledge.

Sometimes on the roof of the house a little upper room is built. In the great heat of summer the family sleep in it, for it is cooler than the room below. Occasionally it has no roof, only four walls and a trellis of boughs overhead, on which a vine is trained. These rooms are usually reached from the ground by a staircase outside the house. Such a chamber as this was that made by the Shunamite woman for Elisha, "a little chamber on the wall," and the outer staircase allowed him to come and go privately.

The roof-top sees almost as much of the people of the house as the mustabeh itself. The flat roof serves as a storehouse, where many things are piled out of reach of light-fingered neighbors. There are stacked the fagots of brushwood which the women and girls have dragged home with much labor; there grain is spread out to dry, and olives to ripen; there the family sit in the cool of the evening when the day's work is done, the father smoking his long pipe, and the children running from side to side, to see what is going on in the narrow lanes of the village.

If there is no good well in the neighborhood each house is provided with its cistern, in which rain-water is collected and stored. A cistern is formed by digging a large hole in the ground and building a strong wall round the foot of the hole. On the wall a dome-shaped roof is erected, with a hole left in the top. This hole is to admit water, and it is large enough for a man's body to pass through, thus enabling the owner to descend from time to time to clean out the cistern. The earth is filled in over the dome, so that all looks as level as before the hole was dug. The inside of the cistern is lined thickly with mortar and finished with a coating of a special kind of plaster, which sets extremely hard, and becomes in time perfectly water-tight.

The cistern and its contents form a very precious possession in this land of intense heat and drought. If a long time passes without rain, and the water in the cisterns falls low, there comes a period of great scarcity. Those whose water has run out creep by night to steal from the cisterns that still hold a little, and the owners of the latter have to watch their store. One method of guarding against these water-thieves is for the owner to spread his bed on the stone which closes the mouth of the well and sleep there: then he knows that his precious water is safe.

If a village is so lucky as to possess a good spring of water, the women may be seen going at morning and evening with their water-jars or their water-skins to bring home the amount required. If they carry water-jars, these are balanced on their heads both going and returning; if water-skins, the latter are slung on their backs by a strap passing over the forehead.

In the morning, when water has been fetched, the village begins to resound with the hum of the handmills grinding the corn into flour, and this hum has never been silent for ages. Thousands of years ago the Syrian peasant woman ground her corn just as it is ground to-day. The Bible has many references to this grinding of the flour for the daily bread, and it is the handmill which is spoken of every time.

The mill is formed of two flat round stones, about eighteen inches across, the upper and the nether millstones. In the lower stone an iron pin is fixed in the center, and the upper stone has a hole drilled through it, so that it may be slipped on this pin. Near the edge of the upper stone is fixed a wooden handle by which it may be turned round.

The woman working the mill takes a handful of corn and drops it into the hole in the center of the upper stone. She turns the upper stone swiftly, and the corn works its way between the two stones and out at the edges, being ground to flour in its passage. A vessel may be placed to receive it, or a cloth spread on the floor to catch it. In the latter case the flour collects in a ring round the nether millstone.

The work is very hard, and by no means quickly done. A woman who has no one to help her must spend hours every day to grind enough meal to feed her family, and the hum of the millstones in one house or another is incessant. Very often a second woman lends a hand, and the two women sit on their heels on opposite sides of the mill, and both grasp the same handle. It is to two women sitting at this task that the famous reference of the New Testament is made: "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

When the flour is ground it is mixed with salt and water into a stiff dough, and is leavened by working into it a piece of fermented dough saved from the last batch of bread. When the dough is ready for baking it is formed into large flat cakes, and never into loaves such as we use. This is because in the East bread is always broken by the hand, and never cut with a knife. Among Moslems it is a crime to cut bread with a knife, for they look upon bread as the supreme gift of Allah, and regard it as a thing to be kept sacred from the stroke of steel.

The cakes are baked in various ways. One simple method is to build a fire of twigs in a large earthenware jar, and when the jar is very hot thin cakes of dough are spread around the sides. A larger oven is constructed as follows: Upon a flat pavement of stone a great shallow bowl of clay is placed upside down. In the center of the bowl there is a hole through which the woman attending to the bread can thrust her hand and arm. She builds a fire over this big bowl-shaped vessel, until both the vessel and the pavement which it covers are hot enough to receive the dough. Then the cakes are slipped through the hole in the vessel and laid on the pavement. The hole is closed with a cover, and fresh fuel is heaped over the oven to maintain the heat until the bread is baked.

At the time of a feast, or in a wealthy household, many dainties are baked in these simple ovens. "There are crisp network disks covered with sesame-seed, paste buns filled with pounded nuts, and folded in triangular shape; threads of vermicelli are twisted together to the thickness of a rope, steeped in a sauce of honey and nuts, and arranged in a flat coil, to make a large cake on a flat tray; thin wafers are coated with grape-sirup, and powdered with pungent or fragrant seeds and leaf-dust; common loaves, before being sent to the oven, sometimes have the surface rubbed with oil and covered with aromatic seeds, and cakes are occasionally soaked or fried in boiling oil." But these dainties are very rarely seen or heard of in a peasant home. If the fellah and his family can get enough of wheaten bread to satisfy their hunger, they are perfectly content.

The day in a peasant home begins with the family rising from the mattress where they have slept, and going at once about their work. What of breakfast? Most of them do not have any. There is, in fact, only one regular meal in the peasant day—the supper at evening. If hunger be felt at other times, there is no sitting down to a prepared meal. The hungry person seizes a handful of dates or figs, a bunch of grapes, a piece of bread, the first provision which comes to hand, and eats it as he goes about his task.

One writer remarks: "I was riding out one afternoon to a village several hours' journey from Jerusalem, and about halfway overtook a peasant. After a little conversation he asked me if I had any bread with me, as he had walked into the city that morning from a place some twenty-five miles distant, had transacted his business there, and had now got about halfway back, no food having passed his lips since his supper the previous evening."

The father sets off to his work in the fields, and the mother becomes busy about the house. When she puts the baby down safely out of the way, she may put it in a cradle, but she is much more likely to lay it in a manger. All round the mustabeh, the upper floor occupied by the family, runs a trough hollowed out in its surface of dried mud. This is the manger from which the animals stabled in the lower part of the room eat their food, and here the baby is often placed, so that to this day in Palestine you may see "a babe lying in a manger."

The babe itself looks like a tiny living mummy, for it is wrapped in its swaddling-clothes, bound round and round from neck to foot with a long, broad strip of calico, so that body, arms, and legs are held perfectly straight and rigid. This wrapping is worn until the child is about three months old if it be strong and healthy, but a weak child is swaddled for a much longer period.

If there are older children in the house, the washing and dressing of them is a very short affair. In the first place, they don't get washed at all, and in the second, their only garment is a sort of little cotton sack with three holes in it. Through the middle hole the head is pushed, the arms slip out at the other holes, and the child is dressed save for a little cap which he claps on, and is then ready to run out to play in the sand or the mud.

The playtime period in the life of peasant children is a very short one. They soon have to make themselves useful about the house or with the animals, and the little girls are set to work even earlier than the boys.

Some of the children help to herd the sheep and goats, some are set to work to collect fuel. The latter may be sticks and dried shrubs, it may be stalks of grain from which the ear has been gathered, but if there be nothing in the way of wood or straw to be found, it will be dried dung.

In many parts of Palestine dried dung is the only fuel used by the peasants. It is a very ancient custom to gather the dung of goats and cows and store it for firing. It is not an unpleasant fuel to handle, as a stranger might think. Under the burning Syrian sun a heap of dung becomes as dry and free from odor as a heap of straw. In many villages the dunghill is by far the biggest thing about the place. It overtops the houses by a long way, and the villagers mount to its summit to look out across the plain, or sit there at sunset to enjoy the evening breeze.

If the housewife has some clothes to wash, she and her daughters carry them to some stream or pool, and there they rub the clothes with wood ashes or clay in place of soap, and then beat the well-soaked garments with a heavy piece of wood, and so, between beating and rubbing, drive the dirt out. They take no heed as to where this washing is performed. It may be the only water-supply of themselves or their neighbors, but they do not hesitate to defile it. The peasantry are incredibly careless as to the condition of the water which they drink. If the liquid be almost solid with filth, a woman will pour the water through her veil, and thus filter a little of the heavier impurity, but to the insanitary state of the fluid she carries home she gives never a thought.

Some time ago there was an outbreak of cholera in a town of Palestine, and a young man from a neighboring village died of the disease. His mother went to the city and carried home the clothes of her dead son. These clothes she washed in the spring which supplied the village with water, and a terrible outbreak of cholera soon showed itself among the villagers. But so great is the ignorance of the peasantry that medical missionaries have the greatest difficulty in persuading them that their own ways are at fault, and that their own habits are at the bottom of the diseases from which they suffer.

When the washing is finished, there is butter to be made in a native churn. The churn is a goatskin about two-thirds filled with milk. The skin is swung from a tripod of three sticks, just as gipsies hang a pot on a fire. Then two women push the skin to and fro between them, splashing the milk about in the skin until the butter separates. If there is only one woman at the work, she rocks the bag about on her knees. Very little of this butter is used fresh. It is mostly heated over the fire until it becomes clarified, and then it is stored in jars or skins, and used in cookery —for frying vegetables, meat, or eggs, or for mixing with boiled rice. When properly and carefully prepared and stored, this clarified butter will keep good for years.

As evening draws near the housewife begins to make preparation for *the* meal of the day, the supper, to which all will gather when the sun has fallen and the work of the day is over. She goes to her bins and takes out rice and washes it, and boils it in a metal vessel. In another vessel some vegetables are cooked, and, if the family are well off, a piece of meat is added to the vegetables. Every one, however poor, tries to find something with which to make a hot dish at the evening meal, even if it be only a handful of boiled lentils to moisten and make savory the dry bread.

The cooking takes place outside the house in fine weather. A fire of sticks is lighted between two stones, and the cooking-pot stands on the stones. In wet weather the fire is made in the house, but in this case charcoal is used, as this gives off little or no smoke.

When the meal is ready, the main dish is served in a great bowl, which is set in the middle of the floor, and round the bowl are ranged cakes of bread. The members of the family wash their hands, and then squat on their heels round the big bowl and begin their meal. As each person dips his hand into the bowl—there are neither forks nor spoons—he utters a pious form of words for grace, and then proceeds to whip the grains of wheat or rice into his mouth with his fingers. He does this in so dexterous a fashion that often not a grain will be dropped in the course of a meal. Only the right hand is used, and the liquid of the dish is taken up by soaking pieces of bread in it.

When the solid part of the meal is despatched, it is washed down with large draughts of water, and the hands are washed again to cleanse them from the stains of food.

THE SYRIAN SHEPHERD

THE Bible is full of allusions to the shepherd and his flock, and the scenes which furnished those allusions may still be seen, quite unaltered, in the Holy Land to-day. Still the shepherd leads his flock beside the still waters, and finds them a cool and shady place in the shelter of a great rock when the fierce midday sun beats down in overpowering radiance. He knows his sheep by name, and calls them around him when they stray, and carries the lambs in his arms when they are too feeble to clamber over the wild, rocky slopes where the flock is searching for pasture.

Syrian sheep are never placed in a field, as we understand a field. The only enclosure they know is a sheepfold, where they can be penned closely for safety, but cannot find food. When feeding, they wander far and wide over the open country, exposed to the attacks of robbers and wild beasts, and their only guard is the shepherd, who may be aided by one or two strong dogs.

The dogs are not used to drive the sheep, for the sheep are not driven, but led. The shepherd goes before them, and they follow him closely. The work of the dogs is to drive off wild beasts, and to warn the shepherd of the approach of thieves at night. Day and night the shepherd is with his flock. By day he may be seen leaning on his staff while his sheep pasture about him. From time to time he utters a peculiar call, to let his flock know that he is at hand; and so long as they hear his call they continue to graze quietly. But let him move away, only to a short distance, and then you see how well the sheep understand that they depend entirely upon him for protection. The feeding animals raise their heads and begin to run after him at once. If he calls in a certain tone or begins to play on his reed-flute, they know that he is about to lead them to a change of pasture, and follow closely, the lambs capering around him.

One of the most interesting sights of shepherd life is to watch a flock fording a stream. The shepherd leads, as usual, and the sheep follow in a string at his heels; but in the middle of the stream they begin to lose their footing, and drift with the current. The shepherd hurries forward, grasping first one and then another, pushing as many as he can reach in front of him and hauling others up against the pressure of the water. As soon as he reaches the opposite side he hastens along the bank and draws out those that have been swept down and have reached the other side faint with the struggle. Nor does he relax his efforts until the whole of his flock is safely ashore.

The shepherd still wears the ancient garb, and carries the things that shepherds used of old. He has his great cloak of sheepskin or cloth, which forms a coat by day and a blanket by night; he carries scrip and gourd, rod and staff. His scrip is a large bag, made of the skin of a kid. In this he stores his simple fare of bread, olives, raisins, cheese, and dried figs. His gourd contains water or milk.

Hanging at his side or thrust through his girdle is a stout club, the "rod" of the Bible. This club is his weapon of defence, and is usually made of oak. He chooses for this purpose a straight young tree, and tears it up by the roots. The root-knot is trimmed to a round head as big as a man's fist, and the handle is dressed down to a convenient thickness for the grasp, and the club carefully seasoned. Into the heavy knob he drives nails with large heads. The cudgel is now, in the hands of a strong man, a most terrible weapon. With so formidable a club it is easy to believe that David could have slain either lion or bear when he was guarding his flock.

The staff is of the same wood, a plain, straight stick without fork or crook, some six feet in length. The shepherd uses it to assist him in clambering over the rocks, to strike off small twigs and leaves to feed his flock, or to punish and part fighting goats.

As night draws on, the shepherd leads his flock toward the sheepfold. This may be an enclosure surrounded by a rude stone wall or by a hedge of thorns, or it may be a cave in the hillside, its mouth blocked by a line of stones. In either case the shepherd has a little hut of branches near the entrance, where he keeps watch over his flock. Sheep, above all, need constant care, as they fall so easy a prey to wild beasts. If a wolf appears, the sheep scatter in flight, and are easily seized. Not so the goats. These close together and form a solid mass, their horns to the front and ready for an assailant.

In the wilder parts of the country the shepherd must be on the alert at night, and he finds one or two faithful dogs of great assistance, both to give help and to give warning. Jackals, hyenas, and wolves prowl about the folds, and at times leopards have been known to work great havoc. But, as a rule, it is the fierce, cunning gray wolf which does the most mischief, and many are the battles between him and the faithful dogs who keep unceasing watch over the flock. A good dog will kill a wolf in single combat, and such an animal is a treasure to its owner, and made much of. A Syrian sheep-dog has been known to offer battle to a leopard in defence of the sheep; but here the combat was too unequal, and the brave dog was slain.

Wolves are dangerous, not only by night, but often in broad daylight. A shepherd had one day led his sheep to a small valley not more than a mile from a large village. The valley was dotted with bushes, and as he sat under the shade of a tree, he saw two creatures moving through the scrub, and creeping toward a sheep which had wandered a little away from the rest. He watched, and at last made out that they were two great wolves. Suddenly the wolves leapt out in the open and darted on the sheep. The shepherd ran to the spot, drawing his club from his girdle as he ran.

The wolves were dragging the sheep away as he rushed up to them; but on hearing his cries, the two savage beasts left their victim and flew straight at the shepherd. He launched a tremendous blow at them and caught one on the back, and felled it to the ground with its backbone broken right through. But the club flew from his hand, and the second wolf, a huge gray brute, seized him by his arm and made its long, sharp teeth meet in his flesh. The shepherd clutched its neck with his free hand, and there was a long, fierce struggle, in which the man fought hard for his life. At length he managed to drive the head of the wolf against a stone, and partially stunned it. Now he had a chance to seize his club, and a single blow dashed out the brains of the savage beast.

Thieves and robbers sometimes attack a sheepfold, but, as a rule, these rogues prefer to make an attempt on a flock which is spending the night in the open country. Then four or five thieves creep up upon different sides until they are quite near to the flock. Now a signal is given by the leader, and every man fires his gun into the air. The flashes and the noise startle the sheep, which run in all directions. The bewildered shepherd does not know which way to turn first in the darkness, and in the confusion the thieves seize as many sheep as they can and make off with their booty.

If this takes place near a town, the shepherd has a good idea where to look for his stolen sheep or goats. He sets off at once to the town, and goes to the butchers to ask if they have bought any animals lately, and, if so, he demands to see them. Or if they have killed that day, he demands to be shown the heads and hides of the slaughtered animals. He knows at once whether these came from his flock or not, and if they did, he claims compensation from the authorities.

The thieves get rid of the stolen animals because they do not dare to keep them, and to sell them to the butchers is the quickest way of turning the theft to account. They do not dare to keep them because the shepherd would recognize his own sheep or goats instantly, and the robbery would be brought home to them. The power of an Eastern shepherd to identify any animal under his care borders upon the marvelous. He often has a name for every sheep, and he can always point out a number of particulars which mark out any given sheep from the rest, though to the eye of a stranger one sheep looks exactly like another.

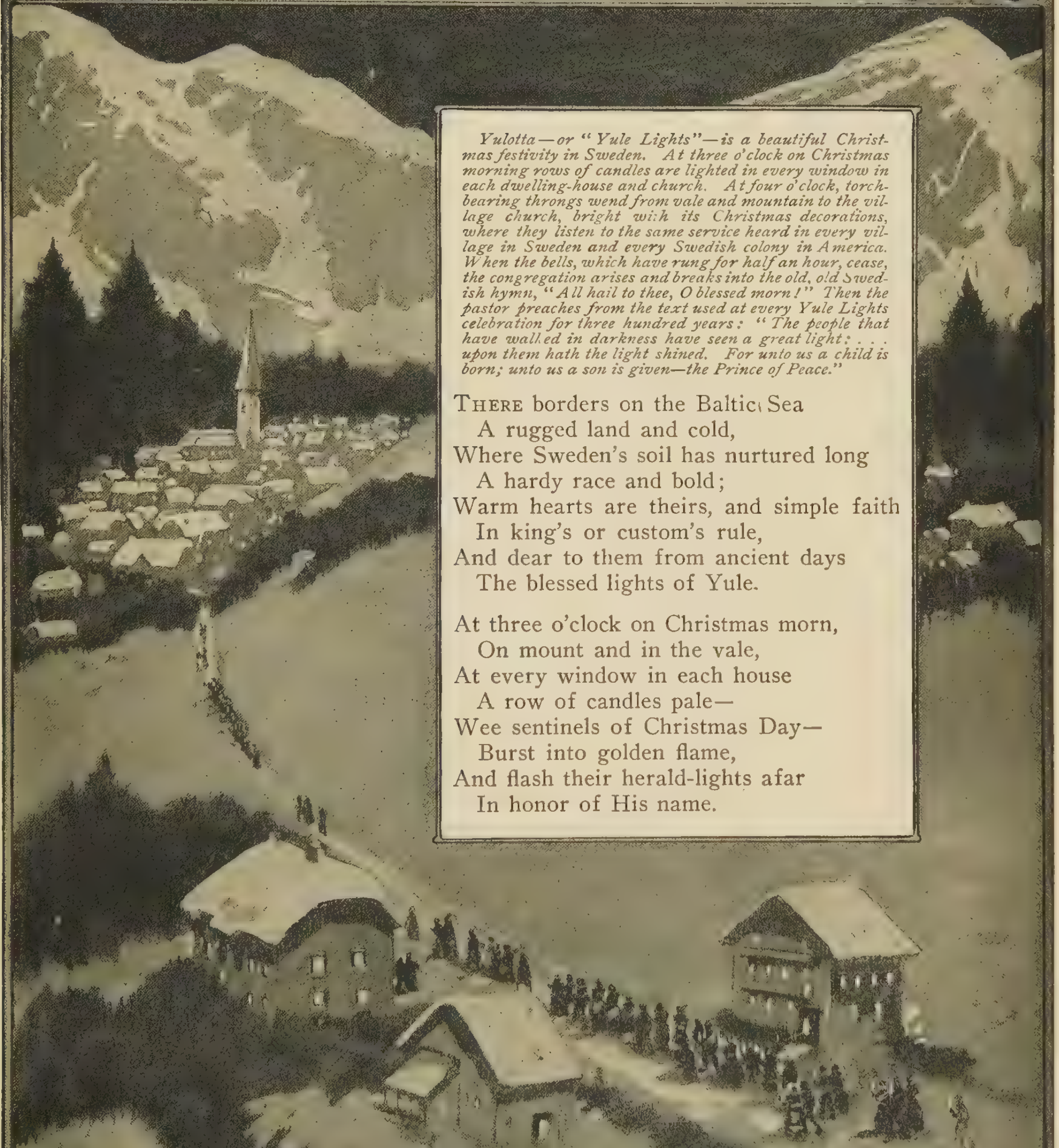
One day a missionary, meeting a shepherd on one of the wildest parts of the Lebanon, asked him various questions about his sheep,—among others, if he counted them every night. On answering that he did not, he was asked how he knew if they were all there or not. His reply was: "Master, if you were to put a cloth over my eyes, and bring me any sheep, and only let me put my hands on its face, I could tell in a moment if it was mine or not."

Sometimes half a dozen different flocks are penned in a single fold, and by the morning the animals are mixed, so that it would seem a difficult task to sort them out. But the shepherds do not attempt any such thing. The gates of the fold are opened, and the crowd of animals begins to stream out, eager to return to the feeding-ground. Then the shepherds separate, and stand at different points around the fold, and each man utters his own call. The mass of sheep and goats breaks up at once, each flock running to its own shepherd as he moves slowly away, calling and calling. In a few minutes the fold is empty, and the flocks are moving off in every direction, each following its shepherd and heading away to the hillsides, where they will spend the long warm day in searching for the scanty herbage.

HO, FOR THE CHRISTMAS TREE!

The YULE TIDE LIGHTS

by LAURA·ALTON·PAYNE

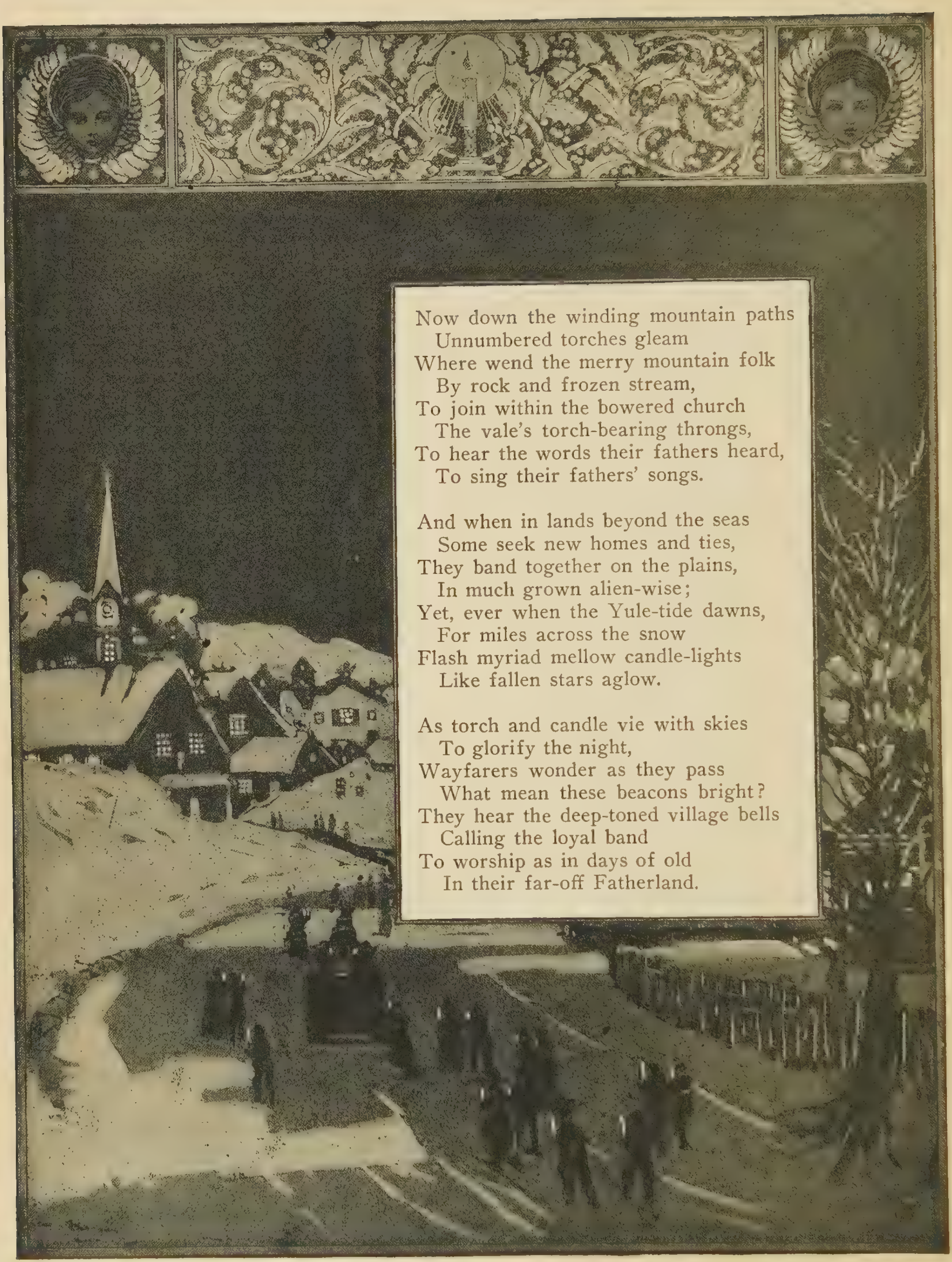


Yulotta—or "Yule Lights"—is a beautiful Christmas festivity in Sweden. At three o'clock on Christmas morning rows of candles are lighted in every window in each dwelling-house and church. At four o'clock, torch-bearing throngs wend from vale and mountain to the village church, bright with its Christmas decorations, where they listen to the same service heard in every village in Sweden and every Swedish colony in America. When the bells, which have rung for half an hour, cease, the congregation arises and breaks into the old, old Swedish hymn, "All hail to thee, O blessed morn!" Then the pastor preaches from the text used at every Yule Lights celebration for three hundred years: "The people that have walked in darkness have seen a great light: . . . upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given—the Prince of Peace."

THERE borders on the Baltic Sea
  A rugged land and cold,
Where Sweden's soil has nurtured long
  A hardy race and bold;
Warm hearts are theirs, and simple faith
  In king's or custom's rule,
And dear to them from ancient days
  The blessed lights of Yule.

At three o'clock on Christmas morn,
  On mount and in the vale,
At every window in each house
  A row of candles pale—
Wee sentinels of Christmas Day—
  Burst into golden flame,
And flash their herald-lights afar
  In honor of His name.

IN SWEDEN: "AT THREE O'CLOCK ON CHRISTMAS MORN, ON MOUNT AND IN THE VALE."



Now down the winding mountain paths
Unnumbered torches gleam
Where wend the merry mountain folk
By rock and frozen stream,
To join within the bowered church
The vale's torch-bearing throngs,
To hear the words their fathers heard,
To sing their fathers' songs.

And when in lands beyond the seas
Some seek new homes and ties,
They band together on the plains,
In much grown alien-wise;
Yet, ever when the Yule-tide dawns,
For miles across the snow
Flash myriad mellow candle-lights
Like fallen stars aglow.

As torch and candle vie with skies
To glorify the night,
Wayfarers wonder as they pass
What mean these beacons bright?
They hear the deep-toned village bells
Calling the loyal band
To worship as in days of old
In their far-off Fatherland.

IN AMERICA: "FOR MILES ACROSS THE SNOW FLASH MYRIAD MELLOW CANDLE-LIGHTS."

CHRISTMAS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

ST. NICHOLAS IN HOLLAND

The great feast-day for the children of Holland, like our Christmas in many points, is that of St. Nicholas. Indeed, we borrow the saint under the guise of Santa Claus, and our little ones look for him and the treasures he brings them. This Dutch feast occurs on December 5. In the big towns the shops are brilliantly decorated for days beforehand, and it is one of the children's treats to go out with their parents on the eve of St. Nicholas to see the shops, many of which distribute small presents from the bag held by a gorgeously clothed image of the saint standing in the doorway.

At home the children meet with the saint once more. The room is cleared, and in he walks, carrying a big sackful of sweetmeats, oranges, apples, etc., which he scatters on the floor. Indeed, the eve of St. Nicholas is called Strooiavond, which means "strewing evening." With all this joy and excitement to usher in the feast, what can be said of the day itself? The excited children go early to bed to bring the morning more quickly. Before they retire they put their largest shoes, or sabots, in the chimney-place, so that St. Nicholas, coming in the night with his black slave, may fill them with good things. The children are not lie-a-beds on this eventful day. Up before daylight, their first visit is to the chimney-place, where they find that the saint has stuffed their foot-gear with fruit and sweets. The more important presents are hidden away all over the house, and the joy of discovering them is immense.

Naturally, give-and-take occurs. Petrus hands over the beautiful doll he found in a saucepan to Betje, who is quite content to give him in exchange the box of leaden soldiers which were so cunningly hidden in mother's large work-basket.

"One winter, at this time of the year," says a writer, "I was staying with my husband at the little fishing village of Volendam, and we wished that the little Volendamers, who are all very poor, should for once have a splendid St. Nicholas. A French artist, who was there at the same time, was of our opinion, and we were equally supported by our host Spaander and his wife and their family of blooming daughters. In the wooden hotel there is a 'coffee-room,' long and low, of really vast proportions. In the summer-time half of it forms the drawing-room. At the farther end of this apartment is a small stage, with wings. On this occasion (thanks to Spaander) the whole of it was covered in spotless white, tables were erected, and upon their surface were arranged about a thousand toys and as many oranges and cakes.

"A white throne was placed for St. Nicholas, whose part was taken by the Frenchman. He wore a long white woolen robe falling over a purple silk underdress, a cape of costly old yellow brocade, and a gorgeous jeweled miter, and he was made venerable by long white hair and beard. The dress of the black slave, whose part was taken by my husband, was equally correct and effective—a long, tight-fitting garment of green velvet, showing a white robe underneath; an orange silk turban was wound round the black locks of a disguising wig and lit up his cork-black face. So much for the preparations, completed with considerable trouble and a great deal of amusement.

"My husband painted a large poster, on which was set forth a notice to all the children of Volendam that at 6.30 a boat would land upon the quay, bearing St. Nicholas and his faithful slave laden with gifts. One may easily imagine the joy and delight of these poor fisher-children, into whose uneventful lives what many other children call a treat hardly ever enters. They crowded about the announcement, and read that St. Nicholas would come laden with gifts. Who can say what wild, beautiful hopes filled their hearts? Before five o'clock the youngsters began to assemble. The quay was crowded with them, so was the narrow road leading from the quay to the hotel. The parents also were there, quite as excited as their children. Indeed, all Volendam turned out to welcome the saint. Rain began to fall; but, although it soaked their poor clothes, it seemed to have no damping effect upon their spirits, all afire as they were with expectation. Meanwhile, the saint and his slave rowed out to their boat.

"It was now almost dark, but in the faint light one could still distinguish the fishing-boats which always crowd the harbor, their tall masts and sails dimly defined against the gray sky, and their narrow flags gently flapping in the rain. At one point there was an opening between the boats, a glimmering waterway, where those who were in the secret expected the boat to appear. The time passed slowly. It was seven o'clock; the saint was half an hour late, and every one was very wet. Still, all Volendam was full of cheerful good humor.

"At length a blaze of bright light far out on the water revealed the saint—a venerable figure standing in the boat, crozier in hand, evidently blessing the expectant crowd. In a few moments the boat reached the landing-place. With blare of trumpets, and by the light of the torches, a procession was formed. How radiant were the faces illumined by the flickering glow! Soon the warm, well-lighted café was reached. The saint sat on his throne, and his good slave rapidly distributed presents to the little ones, safely housed from the inclement weather! Alas! they were very wet; but, as not one of the seven hundred coughed during the distribution, it may be concluded that the young Volendamers do not easily take cold.

"Every face beamed with happiness. The genial St. Nicholas and his hard-worked slave; the Spaander family, all helping vigorously; the three fine, tall Volendamers, who, in their yellow scarfs of office, kept order so gently and gaily; down to the very youngest child—all the faces were sweet and patient, and aglow with the pleasure either of giving or receiving.

"The crowd of children looked plump and healthy, and although many garments were much patched, there were no rags; the poorest seemed to be well cared for and comfortable. Seven hundred of them were made happy with toys and fruit; but there was no scrambling or pushing, nothing but happy expectation, and then still more happy satisfaction. All too soon it was over; the last child clattered down the long room with its precious armful.

"Afterward we heard from the school-teachers and the children's parents that most of them believed firmly that it was the real saint descended from heaven who had laid his hands on their heads in benediction as they received their presents from the black slave."

Don't you think the children of Holland have as much to make them happy as any children have?

CHRISTMAS IN GERMANY

There is no nation in the world that makes such a charming feast of Christmas as the Germans do, and it is no exaggeration to say that the ladies of the family spend months in preparing for it. When they come back from their summer holiday, they think over the presents they wish to give, and begin to make them. Most women in Germany have not a great deal of money to spend in such a way, so they give their time and skill to embroidering all kinds of things for the house and for personal use. Nowadays Germany is a prosperous country; in the big towns there are fine shops, and rich people can buy their presents if they prefer to do so. But the old fashion of making something yourself for those you love best has not died out yet, although the things that are made naturally change a little from year to year.

When a German girl was engaged, she used to embroider her lover's monogram in a pocketbook for him with her own hair, or make him a pair of slippers, or work him some braces in fine beads. The modern girl makes a set of shoe-bags for traveling, embroiders a table-cover or a sofa-cushion, puts a monogram on fine handkerchiefs, or knits a silk necktie. Berlin woolwork slippers are not worn now, except in country places, and canvas braces, embroidered with garlands of roses, have gone with them. But so many presents are given at Christmas and on birthdays that a German home still exhibits every form of handiwork the women and children of the family know how to practise.

About a fortnight before Christmas the fair begins in the market-place, and the shops make their windows as attractive as they can. Even in the smaller towns that have no fair you know it is Christmas when you go to market because the trees have come. There they are, all sizes and all prices; so many of them that they scent the air. They have Christmas-trees in other lands, but to the German mind some have them all wrong. They give a party when they light the tree, or they put their presents on it, or they have it *after* Christmas.

In Germany every one, from the Emperor down to the poorest laborer, has a tree, but he has it at Christmas, either on the eve, or on the day, or on the first week-day after Christmas, which he calls *Zweiter Weihnachtstag* (second Christmas Day), and he has it with his family around him.

A German family may invite relatives or intimate friends to its tree, but never a party. As a rule, there is one tree lighted with candles, or decorated with apples, sweetmeats, and small toys. But there are usually more sweetmeats and fewer toys than on an American tree. Some of the sweetmeats are called *Kringeln,* and they are like cracknel, or brittle biscuit, made in twisted figures of eight, so that they easily hang on. Others have fascinating hunting-scenes of colored sugar on a white background, and the celebrated *Lübecker Marzipan* (an almond paste) imitates all kinds of fruit and vegetables so well that people often take them for real.

When there are several children and plenty of money in a family, each child sometimes has a tree of its own, and at any rate it will have its own table covered with presents and things to eat. All the servants have gifts, too, and come in for the *Bescherung,* or presenting, when the tree is lighted, and the presents are given.

A traveler tells of "one German Christmas when throughout the evening some fresh surprise came to some member of the large family, and these were called *Julklapp.* We had all looked at the tree, which touched the ceiling, and was frosted with silver, and we had looked at our own presents and at each other's, when in came the *Christkind* (Christ-child), dressed in white robes, wearing a golden crown, and having big golden wings. In his arms he carried a huge parcel, which he threw into the arms of a daughter of the house. '*Julklapp!*' he cried, and vanished again. '*Julklapp!*' cried every one else, and watched to see what the parcel held. It was as big as a hat-box, so you may guess how many wrappings the young lady had to undo before she came to a jewel-case that held a row of pearls. Directly she had found it the *Christkind* appeared again with a *Julklapp* for some one else, and he went on with his surprises until supper-time, when he bid all the children 'good-by for a year.' "

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are kept more universally in Germany than in some countries, but there is not such an exchange of presents as, for instance, in France. On New Year's Eve there is usually a dance, and when midnight comes every one watches for the exact moment when the New Year begins. In Hamburg great crowds gather on the Jungfernstieg, the fine street facing the Alster, and at twelve o'clock they send up a mighty shout of *Prosit Neujahr* ("Hail to the New Year!"). On New Year's Day people get large numbers of cards from their friends wishing them a Happy New Year, but plain visiting-cards are used more than the decorative ones that we send at Christmas. Plum-puddings and mince-pies are not known in Germany, but every town has its own special cakes and sweetmeats, and its own dishes. In Hamburg, besides the *Marzipan,* you get honey-cakes and gingerbread-cakes in packets, both baked hard, and uniform in size. In South Germany you get *Lebkuchen,* a sort of sugared gingerbread. In Saxony the celebrated *Stollen* are eaten everywhere—long narrow cakes made with currants, and sprinkled with white sugar. They come down from the Middle Ages, and are said to represent the Babe in the Manger.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN RUSSIA

In Russia it is not Christmas Day, but Christmas Eve, that is the great time of delight for the children. Santa Claus does not begin his work in the daytime; he waits till the evening. Let us see how the little girl whom we will call Irina Petrovna spends her Christmas Eve in a country house.

She wakes at seven o'clock, but the room is dark, because there are double shutters to keep out the great cold.

Presently Mashinka, the old servant and nurse, enters in her short, dark-blue skirt and large white apron, with a white handkerchief on her smooth hair, and opens the outer shutters. As a rule she has all sorts of gossip to tell at this time: wolves have been into the courtyard and fought the watch-dogs during the night, or there has been a heavy fall of snow, so that Ivan Ivanovitch has had to help to cut a new path from the house to the kitchens and the stables and the farm buildings just behind. Or Dmitri Michaelovitch moved into his new house with a cock and hen, and at dawn the cock refused to crow, so all the family are fearing the misfortune which is sure to follow.

But this morning she has no such news to give; she moves silently and slowly, for it is a fast day.

Irina jumps up, and in a few minutes has dressed and put on her warm red plaid frock. She walks down-stairs; at other times she would run or jump, but to-day all is so silent and still that the little girl feels oppressed.

The dining-room is desolate, with its breakfastless table. Generally it looks so cozy, for Irina's father, Peter Vassilivitch, is well-to-do. He owns land, and, what is rare in Russian landlords, looks after it well himself. As a rule, they, like other well-to-do people, spend this time in St. Petersburg; but this year they have come away to their country house, because Andrei the steward wanted to know about some plans for new stables and barns.

Perhaps that is why Irina finds a farmer's manual on a side-table and a couple of calendars beside it. At any rate everything is depressing, and up-stairs her father and mother are praying in their rooms.

In the hall she puts on a long fur coat with a big warm collar coming right above the ears; then follows the fur cap, which comes well down over her forehead. She runs across the rough, snow-covered drive, past the long seesaw which every country house possesses, and then among the trees.

There is no well-kept park round a Russian country house, no neatly clipped hedge to bound it, and no well-trimmed drive leading to the main road, so she quickly gets into the thick forest, where the fairy-like branches of the birch-trees brush against her as she passes.

In a short time she comes to a frozen river, and finds two boy friends busy with a little sledge. They, too, are in fur coats and caps. Forgetting all about fast days and solemn services, she gets into the sledge, and, holding the red scarfs of the boys, she drives her human and willing horses far over the snow-covered ice. It is far from St. Petersburg, perhaps two thousand miles, and as they run they get through the forest and on to the steppes, or great plains. No big trees are to be seen ahead, but bending willows mark the curves of the winding stream.

In an hour or two Irina sees one of her father's sheepfolds, a long, low thatched building all white with snow, and out comes the shepherd with his dogs. Inside the building the sheep are standing or lying close together, creeping closer to a stack of wool at one end of the shed as they retreat before the newcomers. There are no chairs, so the shepherd gives the children rough heaps of clean straw to sit on. Then, forgetting that it is a fast day, the kind-hearted shepherd reaches a piece of rye bread from a shelf below the tiny square window, and gives it to them with a cup of goat's milk. It is rough fare for the children, but the dark brown bread, black crust and all, soon vanishes. Then they rest, and the shepherd tells them stories while they stroke the half-tamed sheep. He cannot read, this shepherd, but he has always known those stories, he heard them so often from his mother and grandmother, and every one knows them.

What shall he tell them? "A fairy story" they say. Shall it be the tale of the Water-snake? No! Irina does not like the Water-snake, it is so sad; she would rather hear about Vasilissa and her wonderful doll; so the peasant tells them the story that little boys and girls have loved to hear in Russia as long as you, children, have known about Cinderella.

The shepherd ends his story just as the afternoon begins to close, and off go the children, along the even snow and through the forest. On arriving home they confess their sins—only the little matter of the rye bread is not mentioned. Everybody is busy; the cook is getting ready the supper, and father is inside the drawing-room, with the door locked. Irina tries to see through the keyhole. Some one has said there is to be no Christmas tree, but if so, why did mother go away shopping for four days? And why did the peddler who came two days ago stay so long?

Irina finds a book, and tries to read it, but it is only Kryloff's "Fables," and she does not understand them, so she gets tired, and goes back to the door with her brothers.

"Cuckoo," "Cuckoo," rings out the clock six times, and then open comes the door. There is a Christmas tree after all! It reaches from floor to ceiling, with a shining star at the top. Hundreds of burning white candles light up its dark needles, and tiny wax figures dance among the hanging oranges. At the foot of the tree lies a heap of parcels. Ah! that explains those four days' shopping. No one is forgotten, and every one makes merry.

Then comes Pavel, in his black Sunday clothes, to say that supper is ready. The dining-table looks very different from usual; the white cloth is there, but it is not smooth. Underneath it has been spread a layer of hay, and the children's fingers are at once busy pulling out stalks Irina gives a cry of joy; her piece is quite complete with its yellow dried flower—and that shows that she will be lucky all the year.

There is no meat to be eaten, but only fish dishes, followed by puddings. Their puddings are very special, and there are two, the white kostya, made of rice, almonds, and raisins, and the black kostya, made of honey, barley, and walnuts.

During supper the children from the school which Irina's mother has started sing carols outside, and many small coins are taken out to them by Pavel. Then follow the young villagers, also singing and receiving gifts. Lastly comes the church choir. They too receive money, and are invited in to supper after Irina and the others have returned to their wonderful tree and their toys.

All too soon comes bedtime, to which the little Russian girl and her brothers object—just as much as you do—and they are allowed on this special evening—just as you are—to stay up a little longer.

THE DANISH CHRISTMAS

Christmas Eve, and not Christmas Day, is the festive occasion in Denmark. Everybody, including the poorest, must have a Christmas tree, and roast goose, apple-cake, rice porridge with an almond in it, form the banquet. The lucky person who finds the almond receives an extra present, and much mirth is occasioned by the search. The tree is lighted at dusk, and the children dance round it and sing. This performance opens the festivities; then the presents are given, dinner served, and afterward the young people dance.

The Danes are a kindly people, and are noted for their hospitality and good cheer. Every woman at the head of a Danish household is an excellent cook, as well as being an intelligent companion. In the apartment houses, or flats, of Copenhagen, as also in other Danish homes, the dining-room is the largest and most important. The Dane thinks much of his dinner, and dinner-parties are the principal form of entertainment. They joke about their appreciation of the good things of the table, and say, "a turkey is not a good table-bird, as it is a little too much for one Dane, but not enough for two!" So we may be sure that the Christmas dinner in a Danish home is prepared with as much abundance of good things as taste asks for and means warrant.

As for the Christmas dancing, that is certain to be a form of entertainment enjoyed by all who take part in it or look on. The Danes, like all the Scandinavians, are renowned for their love of dancing. Lately they have revived the beautiful old folk-dances, realizing at last the necessity of keeping the ancient costumes, dances, and songs before the people, if they would not have them completely wiped out. A few patriotic Danes have formed a society of ladies and gentlemen to bring about this revival. These are called the folk-dancers, their object being to stimulate the love of old-time Denmark in the modern Dane, by showing him the dance, accompanied by folk-song, which his forefathers delighted in. Old-time ways the Dane of to-day is perhaps a little too ready to forget, but dance and song appeal to his northern nature. The beautiful old costumes of the Danish peasants have almost entirely disappeared, but those worn by the folk-dancers are copies of the costumes formerly worn in the districts they represent. These costumes, with heavy gold embroidery, curious hats, or pretty velvet caps, weighty with silver lace, must have been a great addition to local coloring. The men as well as the women wore a gay dress, and it is to be regretted that these old costumes have disappeared from the villages and islands of Denmark.

In olden times the voice was the principal accompaniment of the dance, and these folk-lorists generally sing while dancing; but occasionally a fiddler or flutist plays for them, and becomes the leader in the dance.

After the gaieties of Christmas Eve, with its feasting and dancing and general merriment, Christmas Day is kept quietly; but the day following (St. Stephen's Day) is one of merrymaking, when the people go from house to house to greet their friends and spread abroad the spirit of social gladness.

HOW SPAIN KEEPS CHRISTMAS

The gay, light-hearted, pleasure-loving Spaniard delights in merrymaking, and numerous are the national, local, and family occasions of public rejoicing. National holiday celebrations, local gala-days in honor of patron saints, local fairs and pilgrimages—these are not all; for when custom fails to provide a general entertainment for the day, there is likely to be good reason for family festivities, in that this particular day happens to be the anniversary of the saint after whom father, mother, or one of the children is named.

Important, of course, in the Spanish round of public holidays is Christmas-tide. The great time for fun and frolic is Christmas Eve, *La Noche Buena* (the Good Night). The churches are a blaze of lights. The markets are packed with pyramids of oranges, melons, and lemons. The shops or stores are brilliantly illuminated and decorated with ribbons and flowers, and equally gorgeous booths cater for the extra custom at this period of feasting and revelry. Bonfires are lighted; a great slaughter of turkeys is made, to the loud accompaniment of protests screeched by the flocks of birds awaiting their last moment; streets are thronged with excited crowds diving in and out of shops, dancing on the pavements, moving in processions along the roads, lingering to enjoy the sights; and everywhere there are sounds of music—tambourines jangling, guitars tinkling, voices ringing out joyous refrains.

Nacimientos take the place of our Christmas trees—pasteboard representations of the Nativity, with terra-cotta figures. In a manger lies a model of the Infant Christ; near by stand the Holy Mother and St. Joseph; the ox and the ass are stalled; the Wise Men are worshiping the Holy Child, and there are angels hovering around. Nacimientos are eagerly purchased by the children, who love them dearly, and there is one lighted up in every house, from the richest mansion to the poorest hovel.

Drawn by Frederick Dielman.

"CHRISTMAS LIGHTS DO FADE AWAY
IN THE CLEAR GLOW OF NEW-YEAR DAY."
—OLD SONG.

HOW UNCLE SAM OBSERVES CHRISTMAS

BY CLIFFORD HOWARD

Of course Uncle Sam is best acquainted with the good old-fashioned Christmas—the kind we have known all about since we were little bits of children. There are the Christmas trees with their pretty decorations and candles, and the mistletoe and holly and all sorts of evergreens to make the house look bright, while outside the trees are bare, the ground is white with snow, and Jack Frost is prowling around, freezing up the ponds and pinching people's noses. And then there is dear old Santa Claus with his reindeer, galloping about on the night before Christmas, and scrambling down chimneys to fill the stockings that hang in a row by the fireplace.

It is the time of good cheer and happiness and presents for everybody; the time of chiming bells and joyful carols; of turkey and candy and plum-pudding and all the other good things that go to make up a truly merry Christmas. And here and there throughout the country, some of the quaint old customs of our forefathers are still observed at this time, as, for instance, the pretty custom of "Christmas waits"—boys and girls who go about from house to house on Christmas eve, or early Christmas morning, singing carols.

But, aside from the Christmas customs we all know so well, Uncle Sam has many strange and special ways of observing Christmas: for in this big country of his there are many different kinds of people, and they all do not celebrate Christmas in the same way, as you shall see.

IN THE SOUTH

Siss! Bang! Boom! Sky-rockets hissing, crackers snapping, cannons roaring, horns tooting, bells ringing, and youngsters shouting with wild delight. That is the way Christmas begins down South.

It starts at midnight, or even before; and all day long fire-crackers are going off in the streets of every city, town, and village of the South, from Virginia to Louisiana. A Northern boy, waking up suddenly in New Orleans or Mobile or Atlanta, would think he was in the midst of a rousing Fourth-of-July celebration. In some of the towns the brass bands come out and add to the jollity of the day by marching around and playing "My Maryland" and "Dixie"; while the soldier companies parade up and down the streets to the strains of joyous music and fire salutes with cannons and rifles.

To the girls and boys of the South, Christmas is the noisiest and jolliest day of the year. The Fourth of July does n't compare with it. And as for the darkies, they look upon Christmas as a holiday that was invented for their especial happiness. They take it for granted that all the "white folks" they know will give them presents; and with grinning faces they are up bright and early, asking for "Christmus gif', mistah; Christmus gif', missus." No one thinks of refusing them, and at the end of the day they are richer and happier than at any other time during the whole year.

Except for the jingle of sleigh-bells and the presence of Jack Frost, a Christmas in the South is in other ways very much like that in the North. The houses are decorated with greens, mistletoe hangs above the doorways, Santa Claus comes down the chimneys and fills the waiting stockings, while Christmas dinner is not complete without the familiar turkey and cranberry sauce and pies, as well as all the other "trimmings."

"THE GOOD OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS."

IN NEW ENGLAND

For a great many years there was no Christmas in New England. The Pilgrims and the Puritans did not believe in such celebrations. In fact, they often made it a special point to do their hardest work on Christmas day, just to show their contempt for what they considered a pagan festival. During colonial times there was a law in Massachusetts forbidding any one to celebrate Christmas; and if anybody was so rash in those days as to go about tooting a horn and shouting a "Merry Christmas!" he was promptly brought to his senses by being arrested and punished.

Of course things are very different in New England now, but in many country towns the people still make more of Thanksgiving than they do of Christmas; and there are hundreds of New England men and women still living who knew nothing of Christmas as children—who never hung up their stockings; who never waited for Santa Claus; who never had a tree; who never even had a Christmas present!

Nowadays, however, Christmas in New England is like Christmas anywhere else; but here and there, even now, the effects of the early Puritan ideas may still be seen. In some of the smaller and out-of-the-way towns and villages you will find Christmas trees and evergreens in only a very few of the houses, and in some places—particularly in New Hampshire—one big Christmas tree does for the whole town. This tree is set up in the town hall, and there the children go to get their gifts, which have been hung on the branches by the parents. Sometimes the tree has no decorations—no candles, no popcorn strings, no shiny balls. After the presents are taken off and given to the children, the tree remains perfectly bare. There is usually a short entertainment of recitations and songs, and a speech or two perhaps, and then the little folks, carrying their presents with them, go back to their homes.

IN NEW MEXICO

In certain parts of New Mexico, among the old Spanish settlements, the celebration of Christmas begins more than a week before the day. In the evenings, a party of men and women go together to the house of some friend—a different house being visited each evening. When they arrive, they knock on the door and begin to sing, and when those in the house ask "Who is there?" they reply: "The Virgin Mary and St. Joseph seek lodgings in your house." At first the inmates of the house refuse to let them in. This is done to carry out the Bible story of Joseph and Mary being unable to find lodgings in Bethlehem. But in a little while the door is opened and the visitors are heartily welcomed. As soon as they enter, they kneel and repeat a short prayer; and when the devotional exercises are concluded, the rest of the evening is spent in merry-making.

On Christmas eve the people of the village gather together in some large room or hall and give a solemn little play, commemorating the birthday of the Saviour. One end of the room is used as a stage, and this is fitted up to represent the stable and the manger; and the characters in the sacred story of Bethlehem—Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels—are represented in the tableaux, and with a genuine, reverential spirit. Even the poorer people take part in these Christmas plays.

AMONG THE SHAKERS

The Shakers observe Christmas by a dinner at which the men and women both sit down at the same table. This custom of theirs is the thing that serves to make Christmas different from any other day among the Shakers. During all the rest of the year the men and women eat their meals at separate tables.

At sunset on Christmas day, after a service in the church, they march to the community-house, where the dinner is waiting. The men sit on one side of the table and the women on the other. At the head sits an old man called the elder, who begins the meal by saying grace, after which each

CHRISTMAS IN THE SOUTH.

one in turn gets up and, lifting the right hand, says in a solemn voice, "God is love." The dinner is eaten in perfect silence. Not a voice is heard until the meal comes to an end. Then the men and women rise and sing, standing in their places at the table. As the singing proceeds they mark time with their hands and feet. Then their bodies begin to sway from side to side in the peculiar manner that has given this sect its name of Shakers.

When the singing comes to an end, the elder chants a prayer, after which the men and women silently file out and leave the building.

AMONG THE PENNSYLVANIA GERMANS

"You 'd better look out, or Pelznickel will catch you!" This is the dire threat held out to naughty boys and girls at Christmas-time in some of the country settlements of the Pennsylvania Germans, or Pennsylvania Dutch, as they are often called.

Pelznickel is another name for Santa Claus. But he is not altogether the same old Santa that we welcome so gladly. On Christmas eve some one in the neighborhood impersonates Pelznickel by dressing up as an old man with a long white beard. Arming himself with a switch and carrying a bag of toys over his shoulder, he goes from house to house, where the children are expecting him.

He asks the parents how the little ones have behaved themselves during the year. To each of those who have been good he gives a present from his bag. But—woe betide the naughty ones! These are not only supposed to get no presents, but Pelznickel catches them by the collar and playfully taps them with his switch.

A VISIT FROM PELZNICKEL.

IN PORTO RICO

THE Porto Rican boys and girls would be frightened out of their wits if Santa Claus should come to them in a sleigh drawn by reindeer and should try to enter the houses and fill their stockings. Down there, Santa Claus does not need reindeer or any other kind of steeds, for the children say that he just comes along through the air like a bird. Neither does he bother himself looking for stockings, for such things are not so plentiful in Porto Rico as they are in cooler climates. Instead of stockings, the children use little boxes, which they make themselves. These they place on the roofs and in the courtyards, and old Santa Claus drops the gifts into them as he flies around at night with his bag on his back.

He is more generous in Porto Rico than he is anywhere else. He does not come on Christmas eve only, but is likely to call around every night or two during the week. Each morning, therefore, the little folks run out eagerly to see whether anything more has been left in their boxes during the night.

Christmas in Porto Rico is a church festival of much importance, and the celebration of it is made up chiefly of religious ceremonies intended to commemorate the principal events in the life of the Saviour. Beginning with the celebration of his birth, at Christmas-time, the feast-days follow one another in rapid succession. Indeed, it may justly be said that they do not really come to an end until Easter.

One of the most popular of these festival-days is that known as Bethlehem day. This is celebrated on the 12th of January, in memory of the coming of the Magi. The celebration consists of a procession of children through the streets of the town. The foremost three, dressed in flowing robes to represent the wise men of the East, come riding along on ponies, holding in their hands the gifts for the infant King; following them come angels and shepherds and flute-players, all represented by children dressed in pretty costumes and carrying garlands of flowers.

AMONG THE MORAVIANS

For many days before Christmas the Moravian housewives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, are busy in their kitchens making good things for the holidays—mint-cakes, pepper-nuts, *Kümmelbrod,* sugar-cake, mince-pies, and, most important of all, large quantities of "Christmas cakes." These Christmas cakes are a kind of ginger cooky, crisp and spicy, and are made according to a recipe known only to the Moravians. They are made in all sorts of curious shapes—birds, horses, bears, lions, fishes, turtles, stars, leaves, and funny little men and women; so that they are not only good to eat, but are ornamental as well, and

CHRISTMAS IN ALASKA.

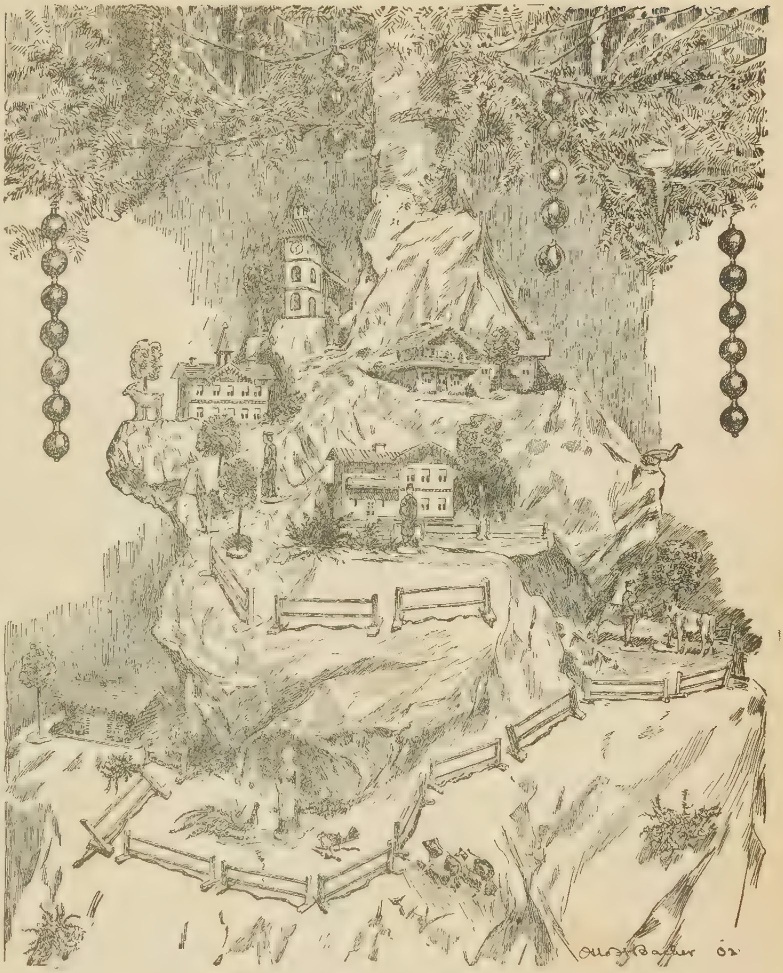
are often used by the good fathers and mothers as decorations for the "*Putz.*"

Every Moravian family has its *Putz* at Christmas-time. This consists of a Christmas tree surrounded at its base by a miniature landscape made up of moss and greens and make-believe rocks, and adorned with toy houses and tiny fences and trees and all sorts of little animals and toy people.

On Christmas eve a love-feast is held in the church. The greater part of the service is devoted to music, for which the Moravians have always been noted. While the choir is singing, cake and coffee are brought in and served to all the members of the congregation, each one receiving a good-sized bun and a large cup of coffee. Shortly before the end of the meeting lighted wax candles carried on large trays are

BETHLEHEM DAY IN PORTO RICO.

brought into the church, by men on one side and women on the other, and passed around to the little folks—one for each boy and girl. This is meant to represent the coming of the Light into the world, and is but one of the many beautiful customs observed by the Moravians.



A CHRISTMAS "PUTZ."

IN ALASKA

"Going around with the star" is a popular Christmas custom among some of the natives of Alaska who belong to the Greek Church. A large figure of a star, covered with brightly colored paper, is carried about at night by a procession of men and women and children. They call at the homes of the well-to-do families of the village, marching about from house to house, headed by the star-bearer and two men or boys carrying lanterns on long poles. They are warmly welcomed at each place, and are invited to come in and have some refreshments. After enjoying the cakes and other good things, and singing one or two carols, they take up the star and move on to the next house.

These processions take place each night during Christmas week; but after the second night the star-bearers are followed by men and boys dressed in fantastic clothes, who try to catch the star-men and destroy their stars. This part of the game is supposed to be an imitation of the soldiers of Herod trying to destroy the children of Bethlehem; but these happy folks of Alaska evidently don't think much about its meaning, for they make a great frolic of it. Everybody is full of fun, and the frosty air of the dark winter nights is filled with laughter as men and boys and romping girls chase one another here and there in merry excitement.

IN HAWAII

The natives of Hawaii say that Santa Claus comes over to the islands in a boat. Perhaps he does; it would be a tedious journey for his reindeer to make without stopping from San Francisco to Honolulu. At all events, he gets there by some means or other, for he would not neglect the little folks of those islands away out in the Pacific.

They look for him as eagerly as do the boys and girls in the lands of snow and ice, and although it must almost melt him to get around in that warm climate with his furs on, he never misses a Christmas.

Before the missionaries and the American settlers went to Hawaii, the natives knew nothing about Christmas, but now they all celebrate the day, and do it, of course, in the same way as the Americans who live there. The main difference between Christmas in Honolulu and Christmas in New York is that in Honolulu in December the weather is like June in New York. Birds are warbling in the leafy trees; gardens are overflowing with roses and carnations; fields and mountain slopes are ablaze with color; and a sunny sky smiles dreamily upon the glories of a summer day. In the morning people go to church, and during the day there are sports and games and merrymaking of all sorts. The Christmas dinner is eaten out of doors in the shade of the veranda, and everybody is happy and contented.

CHRISTMAS IN HAWAII.

IN THE PHILIPPINES

Buenas pasquas! This is the hearty greeting that comes to the dweller in the Philippines on Christmas morning, and with it, perhaps, an offering of flowers.

The Filipino, like the Porto Rican and all others who have lived under Spanish rule, looks upon Christmas as a great religious festival, and one that requires very special attention. On Christmas eve the churches are open, and the coming of the great day is celebrated by a mass at midnight; and during all of Christmas day mass is held every hour, so that every one may have an opportunity to attend. Even the popular Christmas customs among the people are nearly all of a religious character, for most of them consist of little plays or dramas founded upon the life of the Saviour.

These plays are called *pastores*, and are performed by bands of young men and women, and sometimes mere boys and girls, who go about from village to village and present their simple little plays to expectant audiences at every stopping-place. The visit of the wise men, the flight into Egypt—these and many other incidents as related in the Scriptures are acted in these *pastores*. Sometimes, by way of variety, the sacred scenes are interspersed with dancing and the singing of popular songs; and sometimes the village band will play a few airs at intervals; altogether the performances are very entertaining and are always very much enjoyed.

On moonlight nights during the Christmas holidays the young people hold merry gatherings out in the open air, where they dance and play and sing amid the delicious perfumes of glorious night-blooming flowers and the balmy breezes of a tropic land.

Christmas Joys·

By

Emilie Benson Knipe·

The Toy Shop·

Waiting for Santa Claus

Christmas Cakes

Christmas Day

YULE-TIDE TALES FOR LITTLE FOLK

A CHRISTMAS FAIRY-TALE

BY E. A. WATSON HYDE

He stood on the curbstone all alone,
Such a little boy!
The men passed by, and the women too;
The banana man, and policeman blue;
And nobody cared—for nobody knew
That the little boy's heart was sad, all through—
It was Christmas Eve, with *so* much to do!

Where had she gone—the baby girl
He had left at play
While he crossed the street to the grocery-store
Where he 'd earned a quarter the day before?
She had promised true, in her baby drawl,
That she would n't stir from the tenement hall
While he went for his "pay."
How grand that sounded,—just like a man!
Now his plan was ruined, his beautiful plan!

He thought of the mother alone up-stairs
In the big white bed
Where she 'd lain so long since the day she fell
That it seemed sometimes she could not get well.
The doctor came, and a nurse each week,
But he knew by the quiet way they 'd speak
That the awful dread—
A fear which they did not like to name—
Was in their thoughts each time they came.

How could he go and tell her now
That her child was lost?
That he 'd broken faith and betrayed her trust;
Could he bear to tell her? yet tell he must.
Instead of the wonderful Christmas Day
He had planned for them both in his eager way,
This was the cost:
And far, far worse than her pain, this blow
Would be to the mother he cherished so.

Two slow tears welled in the big blue eyes,
As he stood and thought;
Such marvelous things he had planned to do:
He would buy her an orange,—some pop-corn too;
A Christmas card with an angel's head,
And a doll for the baby, with ribbons red;
Why, those few things bought
Would make such a Christmas as had not come
For three long years to the little home!

The tears splashed down and were brushed away;
He 'd no time to cry.
He must find the baby, whatever came,
So he stepped back softly and called her name
Under the stairs and along the hall
And out at the back to the old brick wall
So bare and high;
There was nowhere to hide, had the child in play
Attempted to hide herself away.

He asked the neighbors on either hand,
And they crowded round,
All tender-hearted and murmuring prayers
For the gentle woman alone up-stairs,
For the manly boy—his mother's stay—
And the baby sister who 'd slipped away
And could not be found.
They searched the alley, the area-way,
And questioned the children who 'd been at play.

The big policeman might know—but look!
A stir in the street!
A jangling of bells and of silver chains;
Two prancing horses with tossing manes;
A crimson sleigh as big as a room;
Great bearskin coats on footman and groom;
And there on the seat,
The loveliest lady that ever smiled,
And, *beside* her the dear little *missing child!*

Her face peeped out from a big white rug
Like a sweet wild rose;
And in her arms was a doll in blue,
With flowers in its hat, and feathers too;
And the floor and the seats were covered deep
With toys and parcels—a fairy heap;
How *do* you suppose
That baby sister so *real* could seem?
When it *must* be a dream, a beautiful dream!

But no dream it was, for she called to him
With a shout of joy.
And the lovely lady went up the stair
And talked with the mother suffering there;
And the toys and parcels were taken, too;
They were all for them,—it was really true!
But it seemed to the boy
That the lady's face, as she left the hall
And smiled upon him, was best of all.

"You must n't thank me," she whispered low;
"I am glad I came.
I do it at Christmas-time, you know,
For my baby daughter—I loved her so.
She was taken away, so each Christmas Day
I make some one happy in just this way
In her dear name.
I 'll send a doctor and nurse to-night;
Don't worry, dear; it will all come right."

Scott Williams.

He stood on the curb and watched her go,
Did the little boy.
The men passed by, and the women too;
The banana man, and policeman blue;
And nobody cared—for nobody knew—
That the little boy's dreams had all come true!
It was Christmas Eve, with *so* much to do!

Christmas Without the Christmas Tree

By May Snyder

"De 'freshments am free an' malicious."

AUNT MANDY's face beamed with satisfaction as she put the finishing touches to her Christmas tree. She laughed softly. Never in all her experience had she trimmed such a tree as this. And she had trimmed many.

"Well, sah! no one nebber made Christmas trees out'n umberells in my time," said Aunt Mandy, "but them chillun's boun' to hab sumpin' to hang dey praisents on, an dat sho am jes' a hifalutin tree!" She stood with her hands on her hips and surveyed the tree intently.

The frame of the old umbrella spread its bare ribs above an empty soap box to which the handle had been rudely fastened. Strings of popcorn and cranberries afforded the principal decorations, while cookies, apples and sticks of candy were suspended by strings of various kinds and colors. The presents consisted of mysterious looking bundles of many shapes and sizes.

Aunt Mandy had worked long and patiently, and now she turned away, saying as she closed the door behind her; "Clar' to goodness, hit do look mighty scrumptious—'deed hit do!"

Only a few hours more, and the tree in all its grandeur would be displayed. Never had there been such excitement in Aunt Mandy's cabin. The pickaninnies, dressed in their Sunday-best, indulged in low whispers and smothered giggles. Even the perky bows on 'Liza's and Maria's pigtails seemed to stir with life and quiver with eagerness.

Supper over, Uncle Mose led the way to

the best room. As he threw open the door, a shout went up from the delighted pickaninnies.

"Chillun," said Uncle Mose, with a low bow and a flourish of the hand, "on dis mos' 'spicuous 'casion, yo' suttinly hab a lubbly tree to celebrate yo' Krismus day. An' I will now recede to constribute yo' praisents.

"Fust, foahmos', an' to begin wid, I puhsent yo', George Washington Lincoln Harrison Grant, wid a pair o' skates, from yo' lubbin mammy.

"An yo', 'Rastus Robinson Carter Keller, gits a football from yo' 'fectionate daddy.

"Liza Jane Arabella Helen, git right up on yo' feet an' make yo' bow. I puhsent yo' wid a bran' new dress from yo' lubbin mammy.

"Maria Melissa Wallace Winifred, what yo' gwine to say to yo' mammy when yo' 'cepts dis bonnet, de work ob her lubbin han's? Now, chillun, yo' can walk up an' he'p yo'se'fs. De 'freshments am free an' malicious."

With a wild howl the youngsters made a rush for the spreading tree. "Dey's mo' praisents!" "Golly, what 's dis?" "Huccome dis heah?" "De tree 's ben'in' over!" "Hol' on!" were the exclamations that came crowding one upon another. Then the uproar became deafening, and the Christmas frolic was on.

Uncle Mose stood for a moment in happy contemplation, then his eyes fell on Aunt Mandy's smiling face. "Mandy Mehitable Sonora Frances Somers," he said, "yo' 's a 'ficient woman. I nebah 'preciated yo' 'strabagance an' he'plessness befo', an' I 's glad, 'deed I is, honey—'case I nevah 'spected hit." Uncle Mose bowed, waved his hands airily and took his seat. The perspiration stood in beads on his forehead, but his smile did not vanish. Christmas cheer was stirring in his heart, and Christmas angels were hovering over the little cabin.

When the clock on the mantel struck the midnight hour, doors were locked, lights snuffed out and silence fell upon the happy home. Little black faces smiled up from soft, white pillows, for their dreams were sweet that Christmas night. Aunt Mandy felt well repaid for all her extra care and trouble, and Uncle Mose, wearied with his speech-making, soon fell asleep.

The old umbrella, bare and forlorn, stood in the darkened corner, stretching its bent ribs into vacancy. It had fulfilled its mission. Christmas without a tree and Christmas with an umbrella was a success in Aunt Mandy's cabin.

Christmas Morning. On the Way to Grandpa's.

The Dear Old Tree

BY LUELLA WILSON SMITH

There's a dear old tree, an evergreen tree,
And it blossoms once a year.
'Tis loaded with fruit from top to root,
And it brings to all good cheer.

For its blossoms bright are small candles white
And its fruit is dolls and toys.
And they all are free for both you and me
If we're good little girls & boys.

ESTHER'S CHRISTMAS

BY GWENDOLEN OVERTON

"There 's a wagon coming!" Esther announced excitedly. "It 's the one from the fort with the things for the Christmas tree."

Her mother came to stand beside her in the door of the cabin. At any time a passing wagon was of interest, here in the heart of the western mountains, but to-day it was more than ever an event; for a long winter rain had put a stop to almost all travel; it had lasted through two cold and dreary weeks, and not until this Christmas morning had there been a glimpse of blue sky for a fortnight.

"The roads must have been very bad," said Mrs. Lawton. "It was twelve days ago that they went by, and they ought to have made the trip to the railroad and back in a week."

A month ago Esther had ridden over with her father to Fort Pedrozo to spend the day with Alice Shannon, who was just her own age, and the daughter of a person called the quartermaster-sergeant. And Alice had told her wonderful tales about a party she and Netta Anderson were going to have on Christmas night in the amusement hall. It was to be for the soldiers' children, and there would be dolls and toys and candy and beautiful ornaments. Alice had said that she and Netta had worked for a long time making some of the things, and earning money to send East for others that they could not make.

Ever since then Esther had thought about it, imagining what it would be like, wishing that she herself could see it. She spent long hours fancying herself going to a party and being surrounded by other children. For she was very lonely all by herself in her home in the forest, where her only playfellows were her dog and her horse, and sometimes a young Indian.

Once she had talked about it, but it had made her mother cry. So Esther had been careful not to speak of it again. And this morning she had done her best to seem delighted with the new bridle and the dress and the necklace of Indian beads, which she had found by the fireplace. But immediately after breakfast her father had had to take advantage of the fine weather and ride away to another ranch. He would be gone until night. So she and her mother were left by themselves, and it did not promise to be a very merry Christmas day for a young girl.

"AND THEN ESTHER RODE OFF."

"I wish Henry would stop and see us," she said softly. There was more wistfulness in the tone than she knew, and the tears came again into her mother's eyes. "Oh!" cried Esther, flinging her arms about Mrs. Lawton's neck, "I did n't mean to make you feel badly. I 'm not so very lonesome."

Her own lip was quivering and her mother smiled bravely and stooped to kiss the upturned face.

At that instant the loud cracking of a whip made them both start. It was followed by another and another, and then by the shouting of a man's voice. The wagon, which both of them had momentarily forgotten, was not in sight, and the truth flashed upon Esther. "They 're in the ravine! And I should n't wonder if they can't get out." The shouts and the cracks of the whip were repeated. "I 'm going to see," said Esther, turning into the house. She came back, wearing a pair of boy's boots that met her skirts at the knee, and she plodded off through the soft ground, disappearing into the ravine.

When she reappeared Henry was with her. He had often stopped into the cabin as he drove his teams to and from the post; and to people whose lives were so isolated, he seemed almost an intimate friend.

"We 're stuck in the mud," he said to Mrs. Lawton. "I 'll have to stay here till to-morrow. There 's an ambulance coming down from Stone's ranch then that can help us pull out. I guess you 'll have to give me my Christmas dinner."

A guest less pleasant than the frank-faced young soldier would have been only too welcome; but Esther's thoughts went suddenly to Netta Anderson and Alice and all the children at the fort. "Are n't the things for the Christmas tree in the wagon?" she asked.

"Yes, they are," he told her; "and it 's too bad."

"Alice will be so dreadfully disappointed," she protested; "and they worked so hard!"

Henry nodded. "But it can't be helped. If the roads had been all right we would have been back four or five days ago. I know they 're getting anxious, too. Colonel Anderson telegraphed to Stone's ranch yesterday to find out where we were. I wired that we 'd be along this afternoon, sure. If there was any way of doing it I 'd let him know so he could send for the things."

Esther had the imagination of a child who has always relied upon itself for interests, and she could feel for the others as though the disappointment had been her own. She sat considering, her eyes on the soldier's face. "Why don't you ride one of the mules and take the things in?"

"There are about nine hundred pounds of stuff in that wagon," he informed her.

Esther gasped. "All for the tree?"

He laughed. "Not quite; about eight hundred and fifty is supplies and feed."

"Well, you could ride one mule and pack all there is for the tree on another."

He shook his head. "They 're not riding or pack-animals, and a mule does n't like following any profession but his own. Besides, I 'm in charge of the wagon. If I was to leave it I 'd get into trouble. A soldier must always obey orders."

Esther sat in thought for some moments again. Then she asked: "Why could n't *I* take the things?" and as the soldier and her mother began to smile, she urged her plan. "We could put them on Jake. Jake 's our little white pack-mule," she explained to Henry; "and I could ride Billy." She cast eager looks from one to the other. "I could do it just as well as not."

"It 's eight miles," Henry reminded.

"As if I could n't ride sixteen miles in a day!" She had covered thirty and forty often, and once fifty.

"The roads are in bad shape."

"Not between here and the post. They never are, except in one or two places, and there are trails around those; and the ford is n't so very high," she displayed her knowledge of the country. "I could be back before dark."

Henry turned to Mrs. Lawton. "Would you be willing she should do it?" he asked.

Esther gave an audible sigh of relief as her mother answered that there did not seem to be any reason against it. All her life Esther had wandered on horseback over the mountains, as freely as a child of more civilized districts might have ridden in a park, and it seemed nothing now to allow her to go a small matter of eight miles.

So it was not long before Jake was equipped with his pack-saddle and precious freight. He was led to the ravine and there loaded with all the packages which were addressed to Miss Netta Anderson. "You 'll have to tighten that pack now and then," the soldier said. "Do you think you can?" Esther was sure that she could. She had often helped her father pack.

When at length she was mounted on her pony and ready to start, Henry looked a little dubious. "He 's feeling pretty fresh, Jake is," he warned. Esther called back her assurance that she was quite equal to the task she had undertaken. And then she rode off, still wearing her big muddy boots, and well wrapped from the cold air in an old coat of her father's.

But her ability to manage Jake was soon put to the proof. For the first two or three miles the road was heavy, and he plodded along beside Billy quietly enough. All at once, however, he shied violently at an old, deserted tepee which he had passed countless times before without so much as pricking up his ears. It was all the excuse for excitement that her own pony needed. He too gave a jump aside. Then his head went down, and with a little squeal of meanness, he began to buck. He was doing his very best to unseat his rider, and there was no question of keeping hold of the pack-mule's rope. Jake pulled away. When Billy had finished bucking he had gone a hundred yards ahead. Until Esther came close by him he paid no attention to her; but when she was just near enough to grasp the rope, he gave a quick jump and started off at a trot. She followed him. The trot grew faster. She tried the effect of bringing Billy to a walk. Instantly Jake stopped short. But the moment she moved, he too advanced. If he had kept to the road it would not have mattered, but his preference was for wandering farther and farther away from it; and he was brushing the pack against the low branches of trees with great danger of its coming loose. Besides, the creek was not far ahead, and he was going off along a cattle trail which led to a place where the fording was good in summer, but was dangerous now in winter after the long rains.

"Whoa, Jake!" Esther called, growing frightened. "Whoa there!" Jake began to trot. "Whoa!" she cried despairingly. But Jake with mulish determination kept on. He reached the edge of the rushing torrent, whose noise completely drowned Esther's frantic shouts. For an instant he hesitated. Then he went into the water. It came to his knees, to his flanks, to the edge of his pack! Esther gave a wail of distress. He had lost his footing! He was floundering, he was swimming. The current was sweeping him down and down.

Esther thought of the Christmas presents, but she thought still more of what it would mean to her father to lose his only pack-animal; and she did not stop to realize that there was nothing she could do to prevent it. Her one idea was to get near enough to catch the rope and try to pull Jake to safe ground. She brought her quirt down upon Billy. "Go on!" she commanded. There was a splash, a scramble, a sensation of everything going from under them; and the next instant she felt that Billy was swimming. He was keeping his head up-stream as well as he could; but he too was being overpowered by the current, and the leafless willows on the shore seemed to sweep by with alarming swiftness.

How long it lasted Esther did not know, but she felt a shock as Billy's hoofs touched ground. With three wild springs he brought himself up an almost perpendicular bank and stopped short, trembling, exhausted. Esther slid from her saddle and sank upon the earth. She was weak with fright. For the moment she had forgotten Jake. When she remembered him she jumped up in new terror, looking about.

The sight that met her eyes was a small white mule lying on its side. "Oh!" she came out with

"THERE WAS A SPLASH AND A SCRAMBLE."

a wail of grief. "He 's dead! He 's dead!" She started toward him, leading the pony; but as she came near she saw the stiff legs move feebly. Jake was not dead—not even dying. He had merely fallen as he had struggled up the bank out of the river. And the clumsy pack had kept him from rising.

Esther had seen fallen pack-animals before, and she knew that there was but one thing to do if one were alone, and not very strong,—one must take off the pack. She could manage that. But could she put it back again? It was out of the question to return to the cabin or go on to the fort for help. Some Indian or Mexican might come along and take the pack and Jake as well, and no one was in sight. Not even an Apache.

"I 'll have to do it alone," she decided, almost despairingly. But there was no help for it.

Over and over as the day wore on, she was upon the point of giving it up. Her arms ached and her back hurt. Twice, when the bundles all fell off she sat down and cried. The sun was low when she finally flung the cinch over the pack and buckled it. And a curious pack it was. "You 're so lumpy, Jake," she laughed, half tearfully; "and if you trot you 'll tumble to pieces."

She was worrying very much about getting home to her mother, as they plodded along. Presently they came in sight of the fort, and then Esther heard the retreat gun. It was sunset and the air was bitterly cold. Here and there the fire of an Indian camp glowed. The dogs came snarling and sniffing about. Strange dogs always disturbed Jake. And he showed signs of uneasiness. But it was not until they were within half a mile of the post that he became again unmanageable. Then five or six curs rushed out under his hoofs, barking and snapping. Without warning he let his heels fly. There was an anguished yelping from the dogs, the leading rope was once more jerked from Esther's hands, and Jake was off at a runaway gallop, luckily heading for the fort, but with the dogs giving chase.

The pack swayed and pitched. Esther, following her fastest, could only hope that Jake would reach the fort before it should fall. He was keeping to the road; he had gone through the gate of the reservation fence, still galloping frantically, the pack almost ready to drag. And then Esther saw a man riding toward him. It was a soldier on a big cavalry horse. Jake hesitated, swerved. The pack touched the ground beneath his hoofs. But the cavalryman, leaning far out of his saddle, had caught him by the halter, and he stood still.

"'IT IS YOUR TREE NOW, FAR MORE THAN IT IS THEIRS.'"

After that, wonderful and surprising things happened so fast that Esther was too bewildered to even feel the fatigue of her journey.

The mounted guard took her into the fort. An officer was coming down the walk; the guard halted and saluted. "Here 's a young lady, Colonel," he reported gravely. "She 's brought the Christmas tree things on this mule."

Colonel Anderson questioned her for a minute. Then he put out his arms, lifted her from the horse, gave some orders to the guard, and led her up to the big house from whose windows shone brilliant lights. He opened the door and she was being taken into a hall hung with evergreens and mistletoe.

Suddenly Esther thought of the big boots she was wearing. "My boots are so muddy!" she protested, drawing back. "Never mind your boots," the Colonel answered, and then he called: "Netta! Mother!" Somebody answered and there appeared before Esther's dazzled eyes a young girl in a white dress, and a marvelous lady about whose throat and in whose hair glittered something more bright than any Apache beads. Esther stood before them, a mud-bespattered small figure in a faded blue coat much too large for her, and with boy's boots that came to her knees.

"Here 's the little courier from Lawton's ranch," the Colonel was saying. "She has brought the things for your tree on her own pack-mule. And she 's had a pretty hard time."

The young girl and the lady took her into a big room where there were dolls and toys and marvelous things strewn all about. There were other children, too—who crowded near her, as she sat in a chair before the fire. Every one asked her questions at once. She did her best to answer, but at last she was tired and confused.

In the midst of it all she remembered her mother. She started up quickly. "I must go home!" she said. "Mother will be so frightened," and she was already moving toward the door; but Mrs. Anderson laid a hand on her shoulder.

"There 's a messenger on the way to your mother, now," she told her. "He will let her know that you are safe, and that you are going to stay with us for Christmas dinner. Netta wants you to spend a few days with her."

Could it possibly be true? To stay in this splendid house, with all these toys and children to play with! Then her eyes clouded quickly and she hung her head. "My boots," she said, only just audibly. "And I have n't my new dress."

"Netta has all you will need, dear," Mrs. Anderson reassured her.

Esther hesitated uncertainly. Then there came gradually into her mind a possibility surpassing any of the incredible things that had happened yet. "Do you suppose," she gathered courage to ask, "do you suppose they 'd let me just *look* at their Christmas tree?"

In her weather-stained old coat and her muddy big boots she was being taken into Mrs. Anderson's arms. The head with its shining things was bending over her. "You dear little girl," a trembling voice was saying; "you *dear* little girl. Of *course* you must look at it; of course you must help with it. It is your tree now, far more than it is theirs."

CHRISTMAS ASHES

BY EDITH M. THOMAS

YULE-TIDE logs are burning low,
Twelfth-night soon his face will show,
And those sober days come in,
When the Year's work we begin.

But the ashes—save them all
On your hearthstone as they fall;
Christmas ashes have a charm
That can fend away much harm.

Housewives, take the precious drift
And among your linens sift,
'Mid your wool and silken cloths,
So to keep them free from moths.

Cast the ashes white and soft
Round the byre and through the croft,
Then the younglings of the year—
Fleece or feathers—need not fear.

If so be that ye fall ill
(Far to call on leech's skill),
Put a pinch of ashes fine
In your evening ale or wine.

Holy is the Yule-tide flame;
And the ashes, just the same:
Love the Christmas fires did light—
Love is in their ashes white!

Thus, the whole round year we may
Treasure blessings from this day;
To our hearts catch up the glow,
When the Yule log burneth low.

For Christmas Day

BY

NANCY · BYRD · TURNER

THERE 's a bustle in the kitchen
And a rattle and a din,
And such peculiar goings-on
You 'd best not venture in;
The eggs are being beaten
And the butter 's being dripped,
And the flour 's being shaken
And the cream is being whipped;
The nuts have had their heads
cracked,
The jelly 's all a-quake;
Outsiders, keep your distance—
Daisy 's making Christmas
cake!

"DAISY 'S BAKING CAKE"

Don't say she 's lost her ribbon
And her apron 's all awry;
Don't speak of flour upon her
nose
And smut above her eye;
Don't tell her that the pans
are n't greased,
The powder 's quite at fault,
That the heaping cup of sugar
Was a heaping cup of salt;
Don't mention that the fire is out,
'T would be a grave mistake—
Onlookers, keep your distance
When Daisy 's baking cake!

THE NEW YEAR'S GIFT

BY JESSIE WRIGHT WHITCOMB

THE little boy and the little girl had many friends among the animals. There was the rabbit, the turtle, and the owl and the proud blue jay and pretty, cheery Robin. The old gray goose and the speckled guinea hen and the quacking duck and the strutting rooster and the clucking hens were their friends, too. So were the pigeons and the old black crow, and the little, frisky, scampering squirrel.

MASTER SQUIRREL BRINGS NUTS FOR A PRESENT.

These friends all knew that early New Year's morning the little girl and the little boy would go to the evergreen playhouse for the gift the New Year brought. Nobody had ever told the little girl and the little boy that the New Year would bring them a gift, but all children know a great many things that nobody tells them.

The evergreen playhouse was a beautiful circle of evergreen trees, with an opening on one side for a door. This playhouse had only the sky for a roof, so it was very gay and cheerful. A table for play stood in the center of the house.

THE LITTLE BOY AND THE LITTLE GIRL FIND THEIR NEW YEAR'S GIFTS.

All these bird and animal friends of the little girl and boy thought it would be nice to bring New Year's gifts and lay them on the table in the evergreen playhouse—fine, good, New Year's gifts.

So early New Year's morning the little boy and girl went hand in hand to the evergreen house and stood quietly inside the door.

Then they looked at the table and there they saw all the beautiful New Year's gifts.

"Feathers!" shouted the little boy when he saw what some of the birds had brought. "Feathers of all sorts of colors! I know what I will do. I am going to make an Indian war-bonnet that *is* a war-bonnet!—a perfect beauty!"

"Oh, see the red grains of corn, and the yellow grains of corn!" cried the little girl, as she saw the present the barnyard fowls had brought, "I 'll string them for a necklace!"

"Oh, goody, look at the nuts!" laughed the little boy, as he saw the nuts the squirrel had brought; "won't they taste fine!"

"There 's my littlest doll—the one I lost!" shouted the little girl. The sharp-eyed crow had brought it back from his hiding-place.

"And there 's my lucky penny!" shouted the little boy. For that rascal of a crow had brought that back, too.

So they laughed over their presents until all their animal friends crept in to see.

THE LITTLE BOY AND THE LITTLE GIRL HAD MANY FRIENDS AMONG THE ANIMALS.

"Come!" cried the little boy, "We 'll all have a dance around the table!"

So around they went; the birds and chickens, the squirrel and the crow, and all the friends, squeaking and quacking and crowing and chirping and cawing, while the little girl and boy sang "la, la, la," to no tune at all, just because they were so happy.

"Mercy, children!" called their mother who came out to the evergreen house to see what was going on, "what *are* you doing!"

"Just having fun!" answered the little boy.

"Oh, the *mostest* fun, mama!" called the little girl, "with all our friends!"

VIDA'S GRAY MUFF

By Kendrick Ferris

Illustrated by Florence E. Storer

It had begun way back in November—the Sunday after Thanksgiving when Sallie Carter came in late to church with a gray astrakhan muff. The sermon was too "deep" for Vida, who had her hand at her face and was almost asleep, when a flash of gray in the next pew caused her to turn her head ever so slightly, and peep through her chubby fingers. There it stood on the velvet cushion beside Sallie, trim, warm, and lined with pearly gray satin, exactly like Mrs. Carter's own beautiful big one, but smaller by half. A great longing began to grow in Vida's heart, and she peeped again, this time at Sallie. Sallie's golden curls had fallen riotously over her shoulders, hiding much of her face, but Vida could see enough. And just then the sermon came to an end.

But from that day on till the 17th of December, Vida thought of nothing but a gray muff—how she would look carrying it, how it would feel, and how every Sunday afternoon she would let poor Dorothy Haines carry it for a whole block, just as she had seen generous Sallie lend hers to the little lame girl in their Sunday School class.

On the 17th of December a great snow fell, and all the earth was white. At night the stars came out and the moon was full. It was the first snow storm of the winter, and Vida, by the light of the blazing logs in the nursery fireplace, wrote her annual letter to Santa Claus, posting it in the windowsill. In the morning, sure enough, it was gone, and Vida's heart was light. She smiled at Sallie from her pew, feeling that still another bond was soon to be established between them, and, on the way home, found and praised new beauties in the gray astrakhan muff. And so amidst greater good fellowship and happy expectations, the anxiously-awaited Christmas drew on apace.

"In the Corner of the Great Hall Sofa, Vida Fell Asleep."

The 25th fell on Sunday that year, and Saturday morning dawned bright and clear. The long, fat icicles, hanging above the nursery window, glistened in the sunlight, and the hemlock boughs swept the ground under their weight of snow. Vida and her mother were standing together at the nursery window as, with a jingle of merry bells, the Carters' sleigh drove by. Vida sighed contentedly.

"To-morrow," she said, "*I* shall be carrying a gray astrakhan muff."

Her mother looked at her questioningly.

"Santa Claus will bring it to me," Vida said in answer to the look.

Her mother laughed merrily. "Why, Vida dear," she said. "You asked Santa Claus for seven other things—you said so only this morning. You could n't expect him to remember them all, and he 's as likely to forget the muff as the French doll, or the tea set. It 's foolish to count on any one thing when you made so long a list. I told you to be moderate." And her busy mother hurried off in answer to a call from Aunt Jane.

Not count on it! Why, she had done nothing but count on it ever since Santa Claus had found her note. Not count on it! Why, Christmas would be nothing without it!

But her mother was right—he might forget it among so many things! Why had n't she asked for only that one present? She did n't want those other things anyway, and this was the day before Christmas—no word could reach Santa now.

"'Oh, Papa, Papa,' She Cried Excitedly, 'See, there is Something out on the Roof!'"

The day passed feverishly for Vida. Upstairs and down she wandered from window to window, from person to person—anxious, unhappy, impatient. Would the long hours never go!

At last twilight came, and the darkness fell. And in the corner of the great hall sofa, facing the clock on the stairs, Vida, a disconsolate little body, fell asleep.

Her mother wakened her when it was time to hang up her stocking, and then, in spite of her warning, and in spite of her long hours of worry, hope was born again, and when Vida kissed her mother good-night, visions of gray astrakhan muffs danced in her head.

"Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!"

It seemed to Vida she had but closed her eyes, and there stood mother and Aunt Jane beside her bed, one with her little worsted shoes and the other with her red eiderdown wrapper to hurry her over to the nursery where her father stood waiting at the door.

"Merry Cristmas! Merry Christmas! Oh, papa, I said it *first!*" she cried laughingly as her father caught her in his arms.

But what had Santa Claus done to the nursery? He had decorated the four walls and the chandelier with greens; and in the corner opposite the fireplace, he had stood a giant Christmas tree, bedecked with glittering knickknacks of every description. It was wonderful!

Vida drew a quiet breath, and gave a little happy exclamation. Then she flew straight to the fireplace—the muff should be there.

Of the seven presents six were not forgotten, and there were others she had not asked for: a pearl-handled knife in the toe of her stocking (she had remembered how much she needed a knife only yesterday morning); an album for her postal cards—why had n't she thought of that? She had over a hundred postals that Uncle Jack had sent her—of course she wanted an album. A cuckoo clock, that even as she looked, flung open its little carved doors, and shot out the cuckoo. It was seven o'clock. Surely no little girl ever had a more beautiful Christmas!

But Vida's lips were quivering, and a great lump swelled in her throat. The muff—the beautiful gray astrakhan muff, was not there! Santa Claus had forgotten it!

But Vida was brave. And she would not let those who loved her see her cry, or suspect her disappointment. She turned away from them and went over to the north window, fighting with her tears.

The kitchen roof stretched out under this window, and for days now even the print of a bird's claw had not broken its mantle of white. But now Vida looked at it in wonderment, for the beautiful crust was sadly broken, and a line of tracks ran from the edge of the roof, and back to——

"Oh, papa, papa," she cried excitedly, "come here, come here right away. See, there is something out on the roof!"

Her father opened the window quickly, and climbed out. Vida's heart beat so wildly she could scarcely speak. Her father was picking up a box—it was about the size of Aunt Jane's cooky jar, and it was round.

"Well," her father said, as he climbed back laughing into the nursery. "Here 's something Old St. Nick dropped, and from its size I guess it 's meant for you."

Vida's hands trembled so she could scarcely tug off the round top of the box. Just as it was about to yield, a sudden fear fell upon her heart.

"Papa, perhaps—perhaps he did n't mean it for me. Perhaps he dropped it and it belongs to some other little girl."

Her father's eyes twinkled.

"Look at the bottom of the box, Little One," he said.

Vida turned the box upside down. There was her name—Vida Sumner Lane, as plain as plain could be, and while she was staring at it open mouthed, out dropped—not a little gray astrakhan muff, but a beautiful soft *chinchilla* one and a little collar to match! And Sallie Carter peeped through *her* fingers that Christmas morning at the happiest little girl in all Christendom.

The Christmas Goose

BY JESSIE WRIGHT WHITCOMB

THE little boy and the little girl sat at the breakfast table eating oatmeal and milk.

The papa said to the mama: "A Christmas goose is the best thing there is. This year we must have a Christmas goose."

The little girl looked up at the little boy and smiled, and the little boy smiled back.

After breakfast the little girl and the little boy put on their caps and coats and mittens, and started off for the barn-yard.

They met a big, old, fat duck.

"Are you the Christmas goose?" said the little girl.

The big, old, fat duck shook her head.

They met a big, old, fat hen.

"Are you the Christmas goose?" said the little boy.

But the big, old, fat hen shook her head.

They met a big, old, fat guinea-hen.

"Are you the Christmas goose?" asked the little boy.

The big, old, fat guinea-hen shook her head.

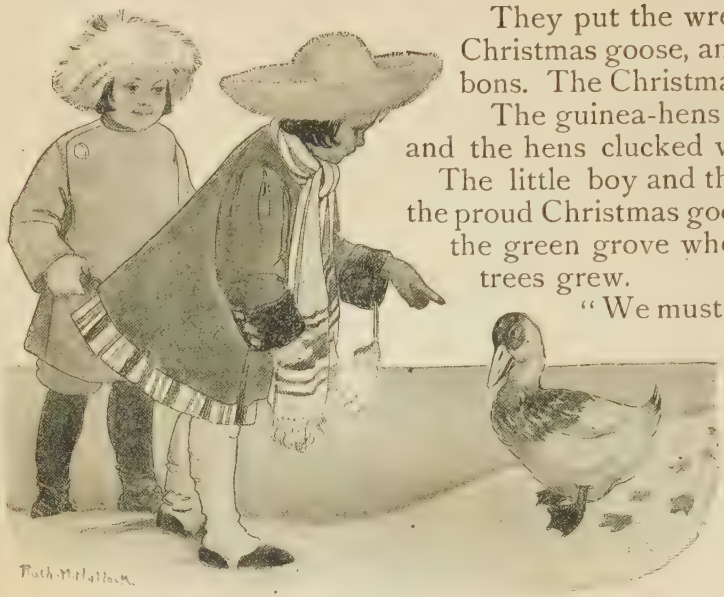
They met a big, old, fat white goose.

"Are you the Christmas goose?" asked the little girl.

And the big, old, fat, white goose nodded her head, and fluffed her feathers, and stepped proudly with her flat, yellow, webbed feet.

"Oh, goody!" shouted the little boy. "We 've found our Christmas goose already!"

"Oh! Oh! Oh! I know something," said the little girl, and she ran to the house, just as fast as she could go. And when she came back she had a lovely little holly wreath, tied with beautiful long red and green ribbons.


Ruth M. Hallock.

"'ARE YOU THE CHRISTMAS GOOSE?' SAID THE LITTLE GIRL."

They put the wreath over the head of the Christmas goose, and each held one of the ribbons. The Christmas goose waddled proudly.

The guinea-hens piped, the ducks quacked, and the hens clucked when they saw this sight. The little boy and the little girl led and drove the proud Christmas goose out of the barn-yard to the green grove where all the little Christmas trees grew.

"We must have a Christmas tree for our Christmas goose," said the little girl.

"Yes, yes, Christmas Goose," said the little boy, "you wait right here for us! Don't you muss your holly wreath, and don't you muss your ribbons!"

The proud Christmas goose waddled gently, to show how careful she would be. The little boy and the little girl ran away fast to get the things for the tree.

The little girl brought back some ears of red and yellow corn, and a bunch of wheat and barley heads, and a pocketful of oats.

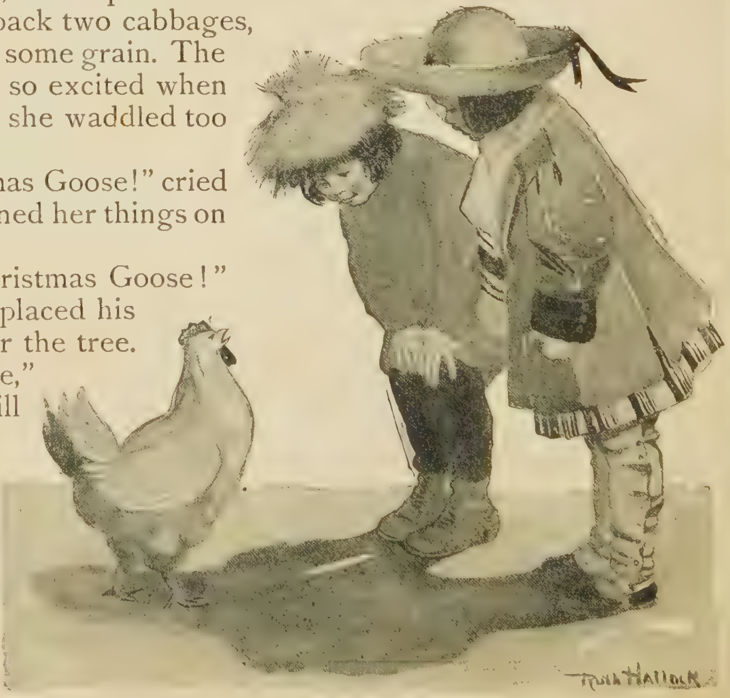
The little boy brought back two cabbages, and a yellow pumpkin, and some grain. The Christmas goose became so excited when she saw those things, that she waddled too fast.

"Wait a minute, Christmas Goose!" cried the little girl, and she fastened her things on the tree.

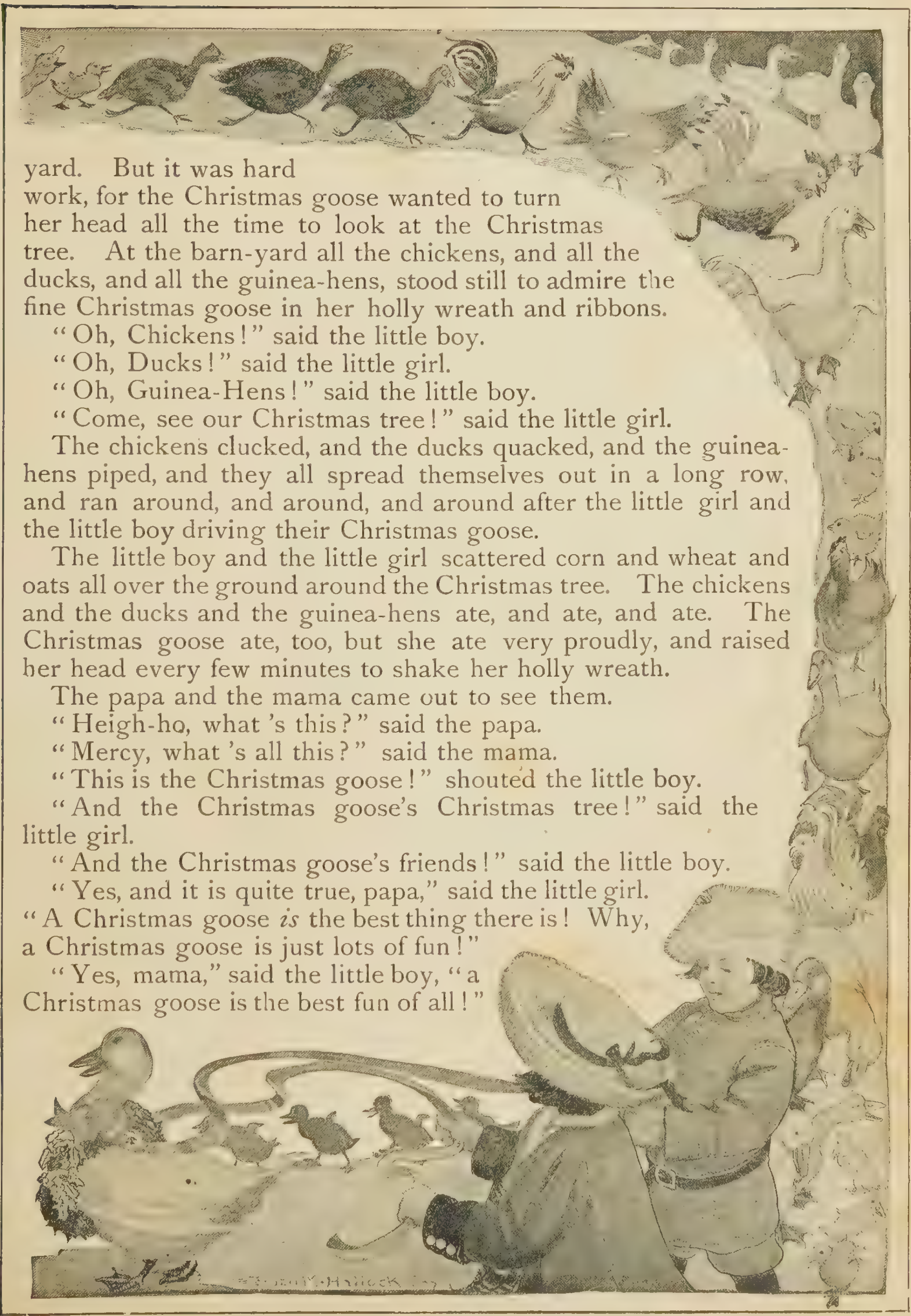
"It is n't quite time, Christmas Goose!" cried the little boy, and he placed his things on the ground near the tree.

"Now, Christmas Goose," said the little girl, "we will go and invite all your friends to come and see our beautiful tree!"

So the little girl picked up her ribbon and the little boy picked up his ribbon, and they led and drove the Christmas goose back to the barn-



"'ARE YOU THE CHRISTMAS GOOSE?' SAID THE LITTLE BOY."



yard. But it was hard work, for the Christmas goose wanted to turn her head all the time to look at the Christmas tree. At the barn-yard all the chickens, and all the ducks, and all the guinea-hens, stood still to admire the fine Christmas goose in her holly wreath and ribbons.

"Oh, Chickens!" said the little boy.

"Oh, Ducks!" said the little girl.

"Oh, Guinea-Hens!" said the little boy.

"Come, see our Christmas tree!" said the little girl.

The chickens clucked, and the ducks quacked, and the guinea-hens piped, and they all spread themselves out in a long row, and ran around, and around, and around after the little girl and the little boy driving their Christmas goose.

The little boy and the little girl scattered corn and wheat and oats all over the ground around the Christmas tree. The chickens and the ducks and the guinea-hens ate, and ate, and ate. The Christmas goose ate, too, but she ate very proudly, and raised her head every few minutes to shake her holly wreath.

The papa and the mama came out to see them.

"Heigh-ho, what 's this?" said the papa.

"Mercy, what 's all this?" said the mama.

"This is the Christmas goose!" shouted the little boy.

"And the Christmas goose's Christmas tree!" said the little girl.

"And the Christmas goose's friends!" said the little boy.

"Yes, and it is quite true, papa," said the little girl. "A Christmas goose *is* the best thing there is! Why, a Christmas goose is just lots of fun!"

"Yes, mama," said the little boy, "a Christmas goose is the best fun of all!"

SANTA'S SURPRISE PARTY.

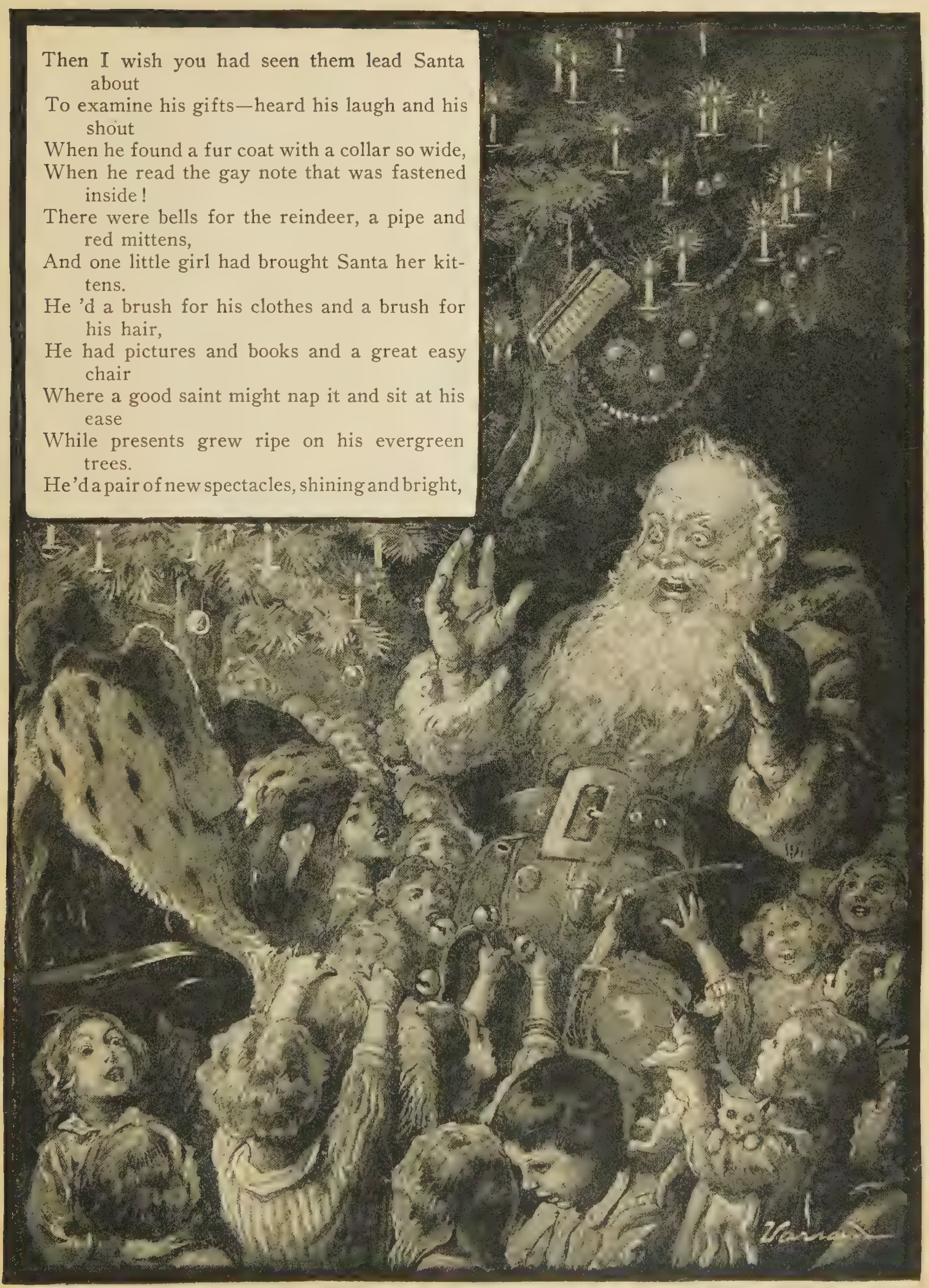
BY

GLADYS HYATT SINCLAIR.

'Twas a glad Christmas eve, and all over the world,
With reindeer and sleigh dear old Santa had whirled.
No one was forgotten or slighted by him;
Each stocking was bulging and crammed to the brim.
"There!" cried the old saint as he stopped at his door,
"I 've made all the little ones happy once more!
But the rest of the night will be lonely, I fear;
Why—what is this wonderful racket I hear?"
He bounded down nimbly, so great his surprise,
But stopped just inside, scarce believing his eyes;

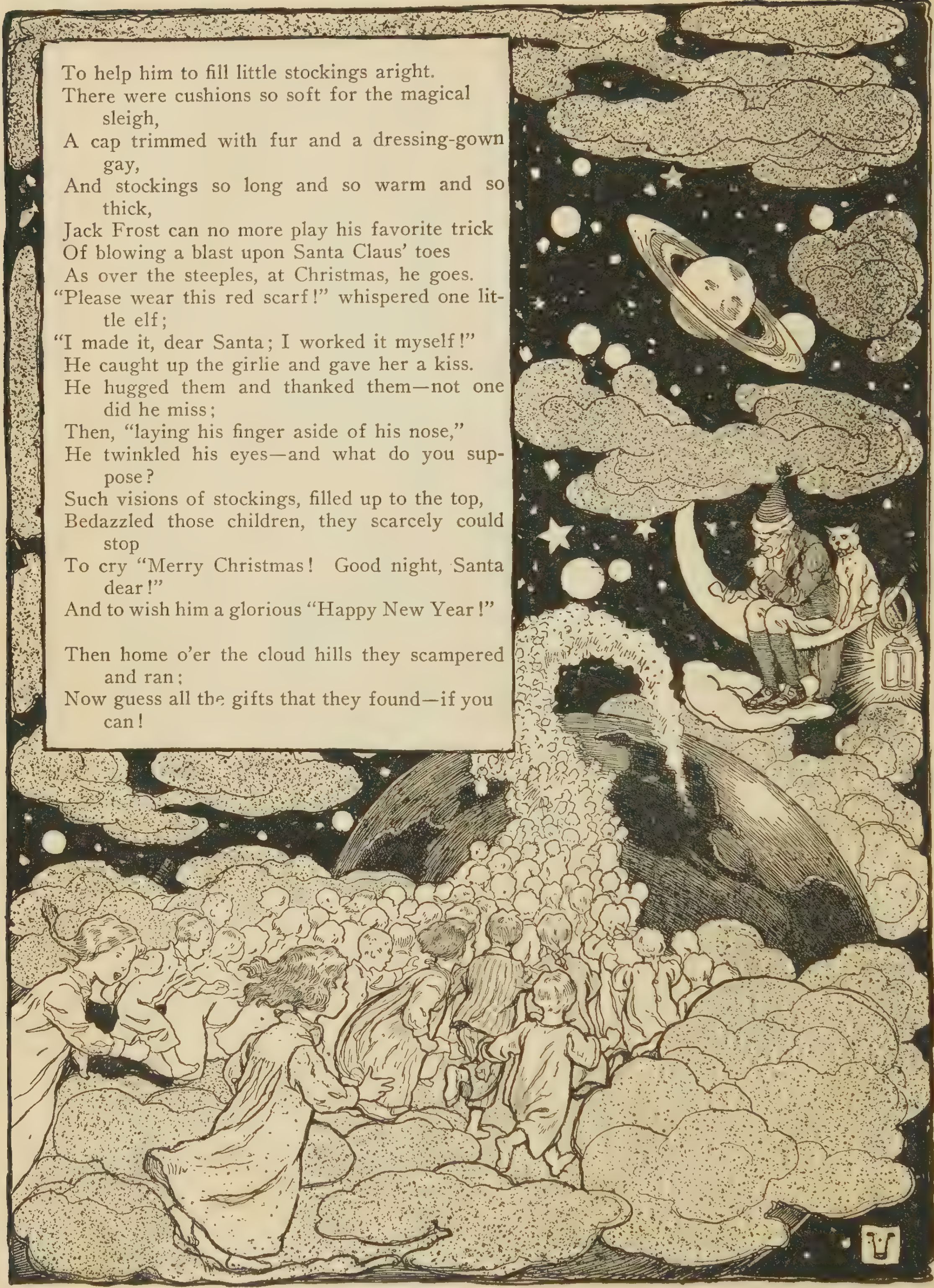
For here were the children that he had supposed
Were sleeping down yonder with eyes tightly closed;
Here, singing and dancing and frisking in glee
Around a most dazzling and beautiful tree!
"Oh, Santa," they cried, "we have found you at last!
How tired you must be! You have journeyed so fast
To take us good gifts; but now, Santa Claus, see!
We have brought *you* some gifts, and this splendid, big tree!
We want you to know, just for once in a way,
How happy you make us, each new Christmas day.
These gifts did not grow in your Christmas tree grove;
We brought them for you, with our very best love!"

Then I wish you had seen them lead Santa about
To examine his gifts—heard his laugh and his shout
When he found a fur coat with a collar so wide,
When he read the gay note that was fastened inside!
There were bells for the reindeer, a pipe and red mittens,
And one little girl had brought Santa her kittens.
He 'd a brush for his clothes and a brush for his hair,
He had pictures and books and a great easy chair
Where a good saint might nap it and sit at his ease
While presents grew ripe on his evergreen trees.
He'd a pair of new spectacles, shining and bright,

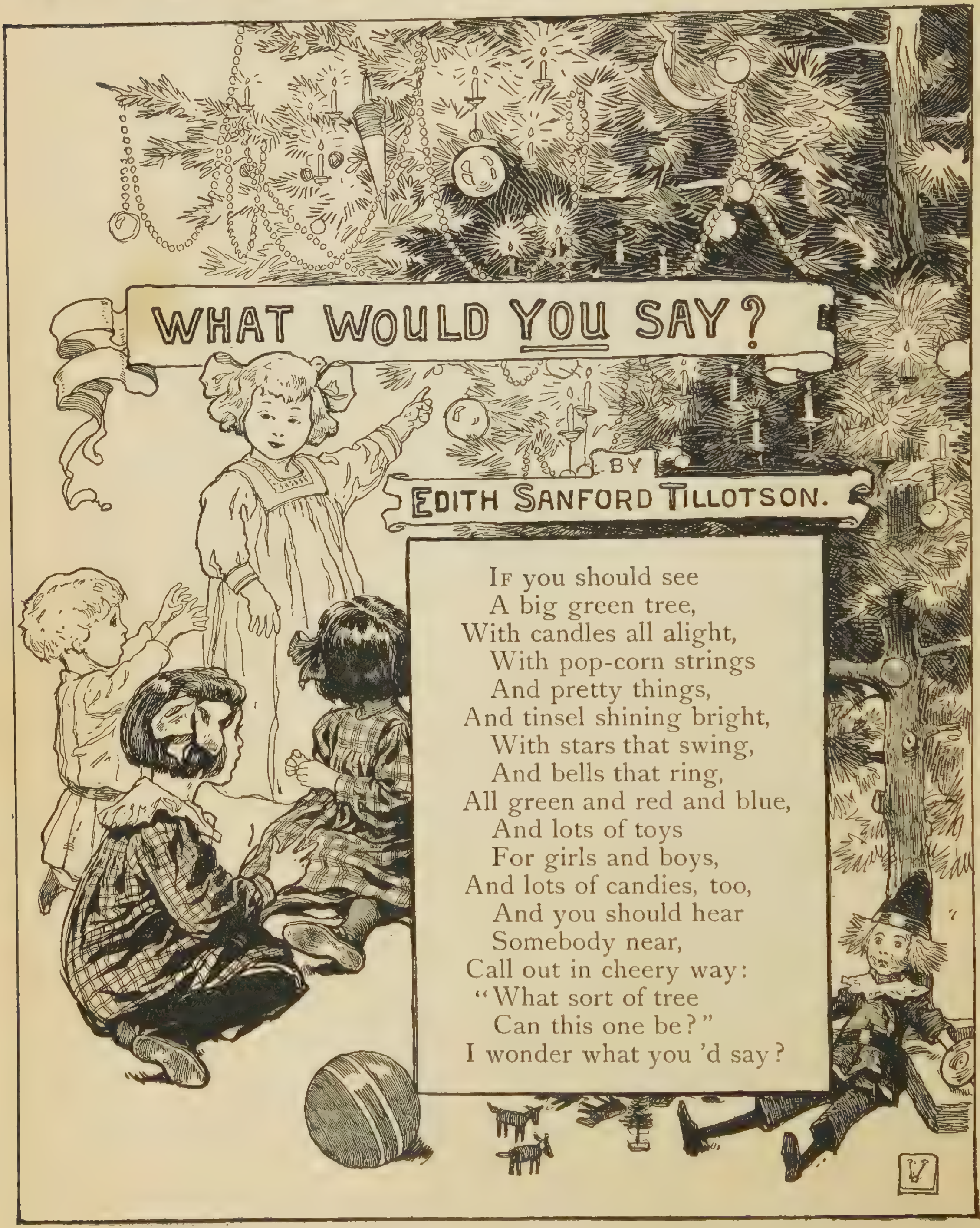


To help him to fill little stockings aright.
There were cushions so soft for the magical sleigh,
A cap trimmed with fur and a dressing-gown gay,
And stockings so long and so warm and so thick,
Jack Frost can no more play his favorite trick
Of blowing a blast upon Santa Claus' toes
As over the steeples, at Christmas, he goes.
"Please wear this red scarf!" whispered one little elf;
"I made it, dear Santa; I worked it myself!"
He caught up the girlie and gave her a kiss.
He hugged them and thanked them—not one did he miss;
Then, "laying his finger aside of his nose,"
He twinkled his eyes—and what do you suppose?
Such visions of stockings, filled up to the top,
Bedazzled those children, they scarcely could stop
To cry "Merry Christmas! Good night, Santa dear!"
And to wish him a glorious "Happy New Year!"

Then home o'er the cloud hills they scampered and ran;
Now guess all the gifts that they found—if you can!



"HERE THEY COME IN THE SLEIGH! AND THEY 'RE TO STAY *THROUGH* THE HOLIDAYS!"

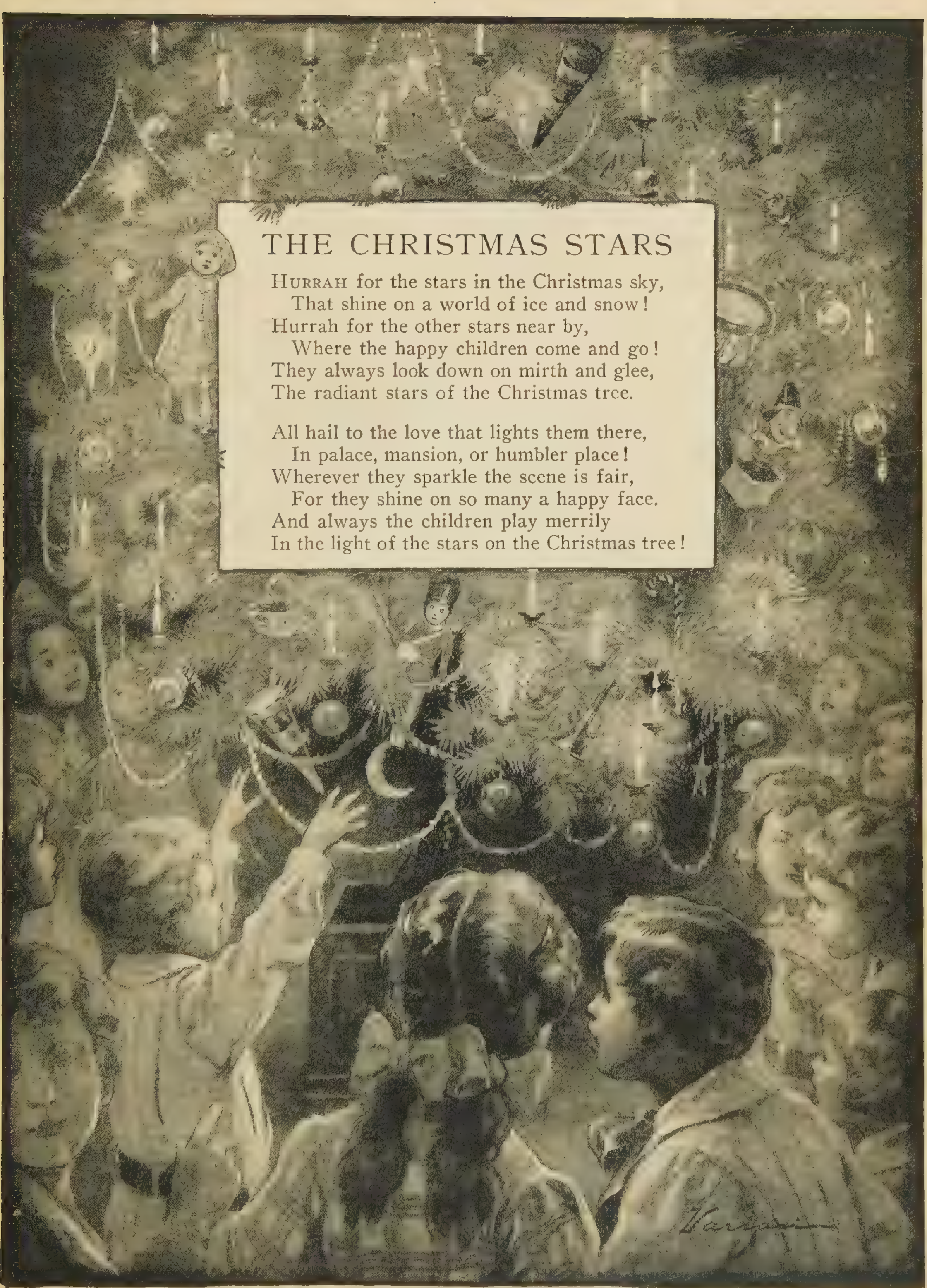


WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

BY

EDITH SANFORD TILLOTSON.

If you should see
A big green tree,
With candles all alight,
With pop-corn strings
And pretty things,
And tinsel shining bright,
With stars that swing,
And bells that ring,
All green and red and blue,
And lots of toys
For girls and boys,
And lots of candies, too,
And you should hear
Somebody near,
Call out in cheery way:
"What sort of tree
Can this one be?"
I wonder what you 'd say?

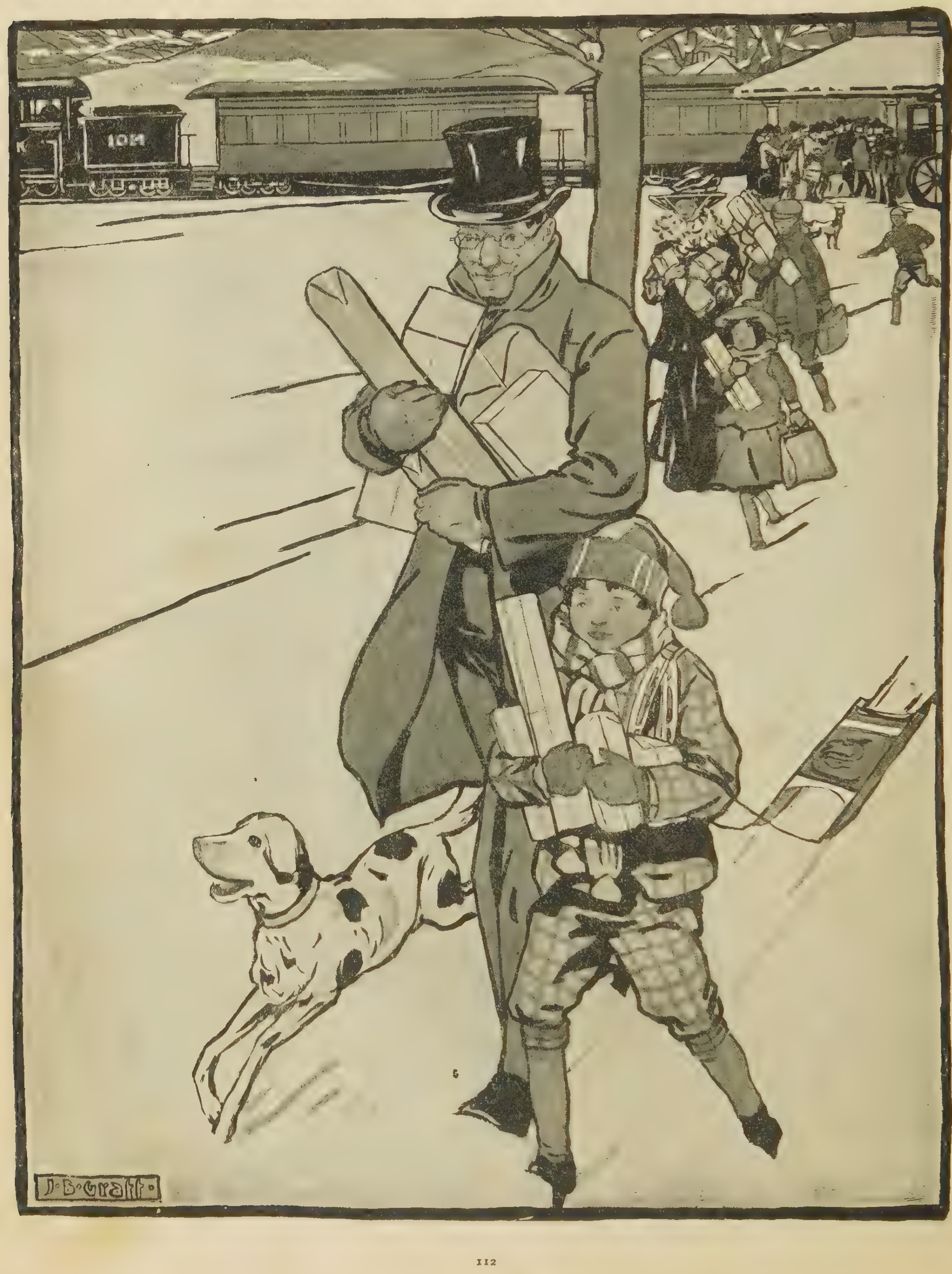


THE CHRISTMAS STARS

Hurrah for the stars in the Christmas sky,
That shine on a world of ice and snow!
Hurrah for the other stars near by,
Where the happy children come and go!
They always look down on mirth and glee,
The radiant stars of the Christmas tree.

All hail to the love that lights them there,
In palace, mansion, or humbler place!
Wherever they sparkle the scene is fair,
For they shine on so many a happy face.
And always the children play merrily
In the light of the stars on the Christmas tree!

At any station of any railway, December 24th



THE STORY OF OUR BIBLE

WHAT THE BIBLE IS

THERE are millions of books in the world, but the most wonderful of all is the Bible. It is the only book which is read in all nations by scholars, peasants, and little children. It is printed in every language. White people, black people, yellow people, red people, and brown people read this book. It is the Wonder Book of the whole earth; the most marvelous collection of printed words in all the world. And it is the Book of Life. We shall read here many of the wonderful stories the Bible tells; we shall consider the beautiful life of Jesus; and when we have finished our stories from the Old and New Testaments, we shall have gained something that should make us wiser and better in our lives than we ever were before.

When you look at inscriptions on monuments and buildings you find that the date is always followed by two capital letters. These letters are either B.C. or A.D. The first of these means the time Before Christ; the second of these means *Anno Domini,* the time After Christ.

THE CENTER OF HISTORY AND TIME

THINK of time and of all human history as a picture—the picture of a vast country stretching under the sun and the moon and the stars forever and ever; and then, in the midst of this picture, very lonely and sad, you will see a cross rising out of the ground, with the figure of a man hanging upon it, dying for love of his friends and enemies. Behind that lonely cross all the country is called B.C.—in front of it all the country is called A.D. Jesus is the center of history and time. From the cross men look forward; from the cross men look backward. Man, you see, has divided time into two great parts, two immense divisions. The first division is the time before Jesus lived among men; the second division is the time after Jesus appeared on the earth. All over the world time is now divided in this wonderful way.

Now, the book we are going to read about is divided into two parts, just as time is divided. It has its period called B.C. and its period called A.D. The period called B.C. is known as the Old Testament, and the period called A.D. is known as the New Testament. The word *testament* used to be called *covenant,* and this word covenant is really a much better word than testament, because it is truer to the meaning. By the Old Covenant men meant a promise made by God to man before Jesus appeared on the earth; and by the New Covenant men meant a new promise made by God to man in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. The New Covenant is really the keeping of the promise made by God to man in the Old Covenant.

Now you see what the Bible is. It is a book about God and man, and the hero of the book is the great central figure in the history of the human race, Jesus Christ.

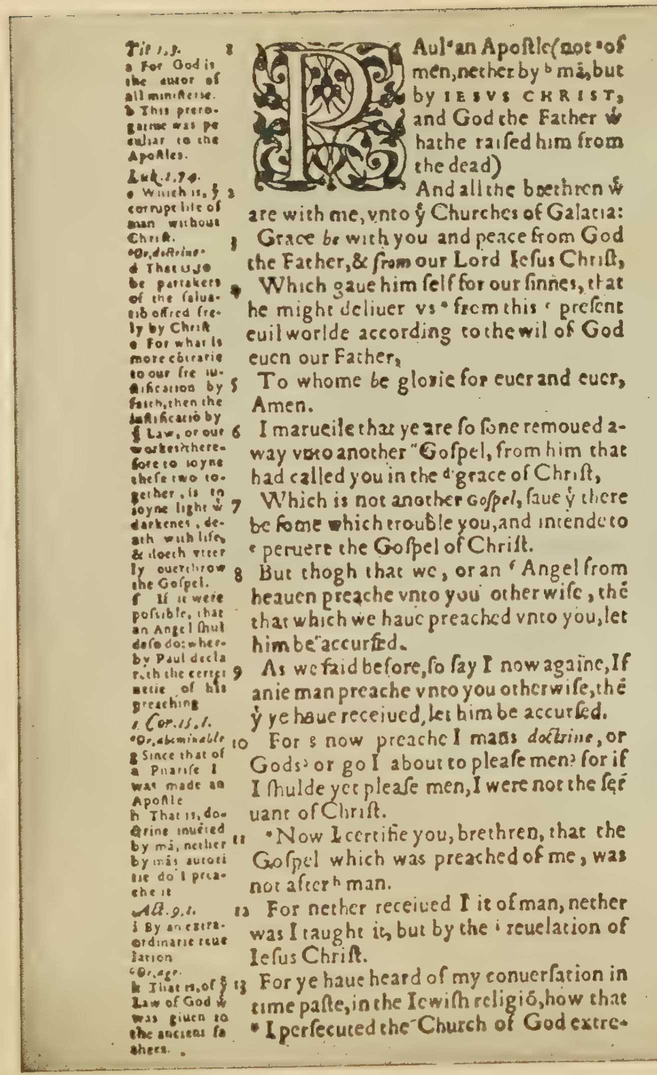
WHAT THE OLD TESTAMENT IS

THE Old Testament is the history of a certain nation called the Hebrews, or Jews, or Israelites —three names all meaning the same thing. It is their own history written by themselves. The Jews were chosen by God to teach the other nations about life and the mystery of death. God promised them that they should be a blessing to all the world. What God promised they wrote down, and kept the writings carefully.

They were a wonderful nation, because, although they were guilty of many sins and cruelties, they worshiped one God when other nations were praying to heathen gods and bowing down before images made with wood and stone. They were a very poetic and kind-hearted people. They loved to live with their flocks, and enjoy the simple blessings of the beautiful earth. They made the home the great thought of their lives. What we call family life, meaning the pleasures and affections of a happy home, was the chief ideal of this brave people. And what made them so happy and strong was their belief that God was watching over them.

And when they sinned, and sorrow came upon them, and their enemies conquered and ill-treated them, still they said that God would deliver them, because he had promised. So in the midst of their sorrows they began to watch for the coming of some mighty being whom they called Messiah, thinking that this Son of God would destroy their enemies, give them back their flocks and herds, and set them up as the rulers of the whole earth. All this is written in the Old Testament.

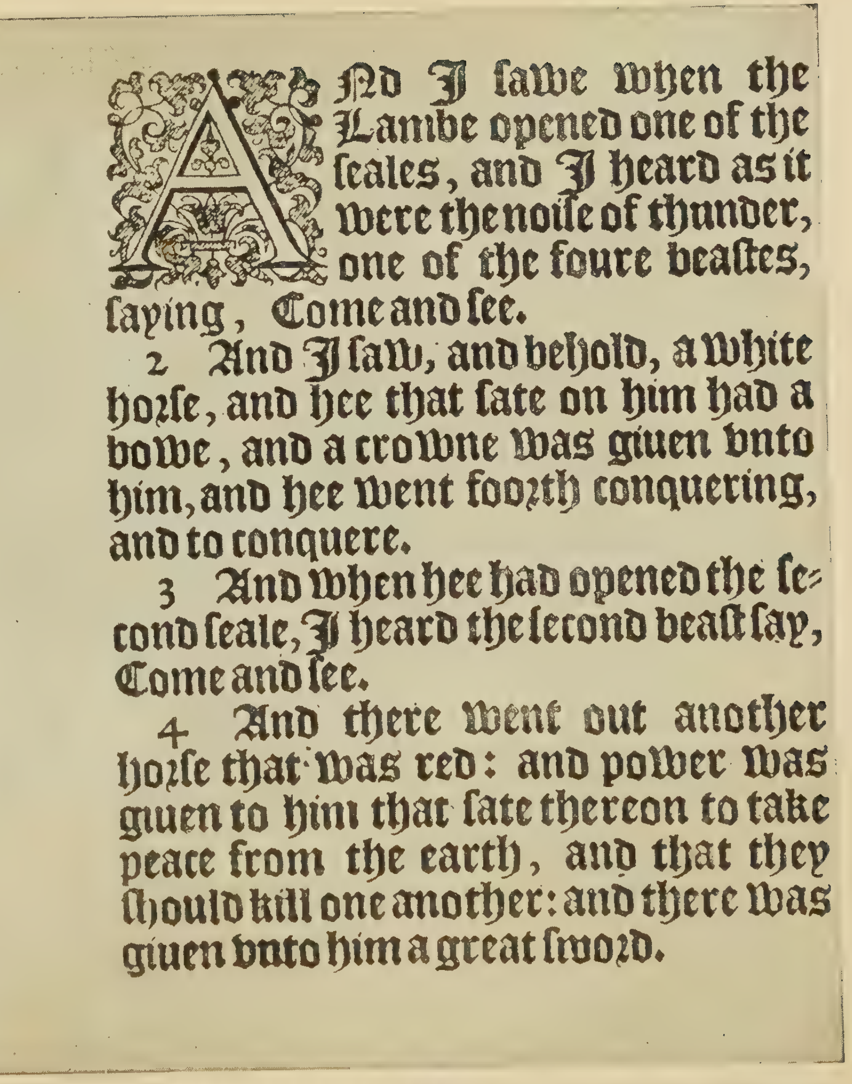
They watched and waited for the coming of the Messiah. The promise of the Messiah runs through the Old Testament like a little silver brook winding through a dry country toward the sea. But when the Messiah came they found that he was not a mighty warrior, but a beautiful young peasant, who sat in a weather-beaten ship with simple fishermen, and taught people that to forgive their enemies was better than to fight



Tit.1.3.
[a] For God is the autor of all miniſterie.
[b] This prerogatiue was peculiar to the Apoſtles.
Luk.1.74.
[c] Which is, ȳ corrupt life of man without Chriſt.
[*] Or, doctrine.
[d] That is, to be partakers of the ſaluatiō offred frely by Chriſt.
[e] For what is more cōtrarie to our fre iuſtification by faith, then the iuſtificatiō by ȳ Law, or our workes? therefore to ioyne theſe two together, is to ioyne light wᵗ darkenes, death with life, & doeth vtterly ouerthrow the Goſpel.
[f] If it were poſsible, that an Angel ſhulde ſo do: wherby Paul declareth the certeintie of his preaching.
1.Cor.15.1.
[*] Or, abominable.
[g] Since that of a Phariſe I was made an Apoſtle.
[h] That is, doctrine inuēted by mā, nether by mās autoritie do I preache it.
Act.9.1.
[i] By an extraordinarie reuelation.
[*] Or, age.
[k] That is, of ȳ Law of God wᶜ was giuen to the ancient fathers.

1 PAul [a] an Apoſtle (not [*] of men, nether by [b] mā, but by IESVS CHRIST, and God the Father wᶜ hathe raiſed him from the dead)
2 And all the brethren wᶜ are with me, vnto ȳ Churches of Galatia:
3 Grace *be* with you and peace from God the Father, & *from* our Lord Ieſus Chriſt,
4 Which gaue him ſelf for our ſinnes, that he might deliuer vs [*] from this [c] preſent euil worlde according to the wil of God euen our Father,
5 To whome *be* glorie for euer and euer, Amen.
6 I marueile that ye are ſo ſone remoued away vnto another [*] Goſpel, from him that had called you in the [d] grace of Chriſt,
7 Which is not another *Goſpel*, ſaue ȳ there be ſome which trouble you, and intende to [e] peruert the Goſpel of Chriſt.
8 But thogh that we, or an [f] Angel from heauen preache vnto you otherwiſe, thē that which we haue preached vnto you, let him be [*] accurſed.
9 As we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now againe, If anie man preache vnto you otherwiſe, thē ȳ ye haue receiued, let him be accurſed.
10 For [g] now preache I mans *doctrine*, or Gods? or go I about to pleaſe men? for if I ſhulde yet pleaſe men, I were not the ſeruant of Chriſt.
11 [*] Now I certifie you, brethren, that the Goſpel which was preached of me, was not after [h] man.
12 For nether receiued I it of man, nether was I taught it, but by the [i] reuelation of Ieſus Chriſt.
13 For ye haue heard of my conuerſation in time paſte, in the Iewiſh religiō, how that [*] I perſecuted the [*] Church of God extre-

PART OF A PAGE OF THE GENEVA BIBLE (1560).



AND I ſawe when the Lambe opened one of the ſeales, and I heard as it were the noiſe of thunder, one of the foure beaſtes, ſaying, Come and ſee.
2 And I ſaw, and behold, a white horſe, and hee that ſate on him had a bowe, and a crowne was giuen vnto him, and hee went foorth conquering, and to conquere.
3 And when hee had opened the ſecond ſeale, I heard the ſecond beaſt ſay, Come and ſee.
4 And there went out another horſe that was red: and power was giuen to him that ſate thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they ſhould kill one another: and there was giuen vnto him a great ſword.

PART OF A PAGE OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE (1611).

them. And then the Jews were angry, and refused to believe that he was the Messiah.

The Old Testament, then, shows us these people seeking after the Messiah; and the New Testament shows us these same people rejecting the Messiah. The whole Bible is, therefore, a book about the great central figure of Jesus Christ, who stands in the midst of the world's ages.

HOW THE BIBLE CAME TO BE NAMED

In very ancient times men used to write the stories of their fathers on a peculiar paper made from the pith of an Egyptian plant called *papyrus.* It was on this papyrus that the Jews wrote their history, and the precious writings were very carefully kept as sacred records. Now, even before Christ came into the world, the Greek people were anxious to learn about the Jews and their clever writing. Men took the history of the Jews told on the papyrus and wrote it down in the language which the Greek people knew.

Now, the Greek word for papyrus was *byblos,* and this word came to stand for book; so that they spoke of the Hebrew writings as *Biblia,* or the Books. The Latin nation borrowed this word, and our first copies of the Bible were in the Latin language and were called *Biblia Sacra,* meaning the Holy Books. At last Englishmen made their own words, and, speaking of all these writings as the Book, and not the Books, called it the Holy Bible. So that *Bible* means *The Book.*

THE WRITING OF THE TESTAMENTS

The Old Testament contains many different books, each with its own particular name. One tells how the world was made by God, and describes God's dealings with men. Another shows how the Hebrews lived under their priests, judges and kings. Many writers in different centuries composed these different books. Some of these writers were historians, others were poets, many were priests and prophets. Their writings were kept with great care for long years until the printing-press was invented in the fifteenth century. Before that time they were written out by hand. It took nearly one thousand years for the book to get into its present shape.

The New Testament is much smaller than the Old Testament, but much more precious, because it has four beautiful stories of our Lord Jesus Christ from his birth in Bethlehem to his ascension into heaven thirty-three years later. These four histories were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the friends and disciples of Jesus. Besides these four histories, there is a story of what the friends and disciples of Jesus did after he had gone back to heaven. Then there are many beautiful letters from the disciples and apostles of Jesus, and the book ends with a vision of heaven by John, the young man whom Jesus loved most.

All these were written at different times, and in different places, by different writers. They were in different languages, Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew. Many people could not read them at all on that account. So in due time great scholars began to translate the writings of both the Old and the New Testament into all the principal languages of man. First they were turned into Greek by wise men who loved the Old Testament. Greek at that time was a language well understood by many people in different parts of the world. Later on Latin became a much-spoken language, and the great scholar St. Jerome turned both the Old and the New Testament into Latin. It took a long time to do this. As no printing existed in those days the Bible had to be written out by hand, in letters something like printed letters to-day.

THE FIRST PRINTING OF THE BIBLE

Bibles were very few and very expensive for many centuries. Only rich people could afford to buy them. Sometimes a rich man would present a Bible to a church for the free use of the people. This book was large and heavy. It was therefore placed on a reading-stand in the church, where all might see and all might read. In order to keep thieves from stealing it, the Bible was bound in heavy metal covers, and attached to a chain. Thieves had much trouble to steal such books, but still they often stole them because they could sell them for as much money as would buy a lot and a house to-day.

At last came the time when a great German, Johann Gutenberg, invented the printing-press. This was about the year 1438. Soon all sorts of books began to be printed. The poor could now have books as well as the rich. As the Bible was the best loved book in the whole world then, just as it is to-day, it was translated into many different languages, printed freely, and sold everywhere. Germany had as many as fifty different translations, and seventeen of these were printed before the sixteenth century began. The Bible was turned into French, Spanish, Italian, and English. Thus for the first time in history the Bible became the possession of the poor man, at the close of the fifteenth century. St. Jerome in the fourth century had turned the Bible into

Latin. Many writers in various countries had used his book to help them translate the Bible into their native tongues. But it was Gutenberg and his printing-press that introduced the Bible to every man, rich or poor, who cared to read.

THE EARLY ENGLISH BIBLE

How did the Bible come into the English tongue? In the same manner as in other countries. First they had it in the Anglo-Saxon tongue in the twelfth century. But after the Normans conquered England (in 1066) they made French the polite language of the day, and the Anglo-Saxon was changed by degrees into something like the English we speak to-day. This change required three hundred years. When the old Anglo-Saxon Bible could no longer be understood by the people, another translation was made, but no one knows who were the translators. In 1380 appeared a new Bible prepared by a priest, named John Wyclif, and his friends, which was used for a century. By that time the art of printing had reached England, and in a short time every one had a Bible in his possession.

But the English language changed very rapidly in those days, so that at last the old Bibles could not be understood by the common people. New translations were made from time to time, about every ten years, from William Tyndale's in 1525 to the end of that century. It is a hard task to translate this wonderful book, and even with the greatest care errors will creep in. In order to get a nearly perfect Bible, as free from mistakes as possible, two parties of learned men in England set to work, one in 1575 and the other in 1604. The learned Cardinal Allen directed the first party, which brought out in 1610 a complete translation of the Bible. It is called the Douai Bible, because the work was done in a town called Douai, in Belgium—now in France. King James I. of England directed the second party, which brought out its famous translation in 1611. It is known as the King James version, and has remained the popular favorite since it was printed.

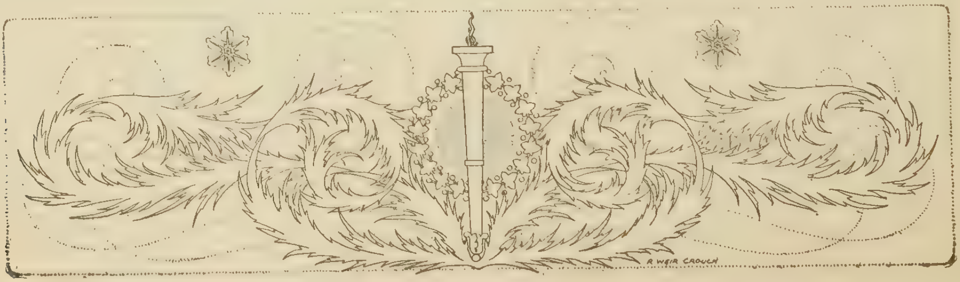
WHAT THE BIBLE SHOULD DO FOR THE YOUNG

Much more might be written about this great book, but enough has been said to give some notion of how it came to be. So when the children open a Bible at the lovely story of Ruth in the field of corn, or that of David singing before King Saul, or at the beautiful narrative of the angels appearing to the shepherds of Bethlehem, let them remember what has been here set down. How many great men have labored hard, suffered much, and even died, in order to place that glorious book in their hands!

Let them also bear in mind the intention of God in the division of the Bible into two parts. The first part speaks constantly of the coming of the Redeemer, Jesus the Son of God, who was to save mankind from sin and eternal death. God promised to send his son in the form of a man to be the king and the comfort of the whole human race. The children must read the stories from the Old Testament with this promise in their minds. They will see then how the people of the Bible stories were looking anxiously for the Redeemer's coming.

The New Testament tells how he came, in the story of Jesus; how he was born in Bethlehem, lived in Nazareth, died on Calvary, rose the third day from the tomb in the garden, and forty days later, from the summit of Mount Olivet, went back to heaven.

Let them remember also that they are to be like Jesus in their daily life; that they are to meet him after death to give an account of how they spent their time on this earth; and that he is to come again at the end of the world to judge all men for the last time. With these things in mind the reading of the beautiful Bible stories and histories will turn the thoughts of the children away from the mere pleasure of reading to the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.



OLD TESTAMENT STORIES FOR CHILDREN

THE CREATION

Dear children, to you the world is a very beautiful place: there are the bright sunshine, the blue sky, the sparkling waters, the green fields, the waving trees, the pretty flowers, the cattle grazing in the meadows, besides many creatures you have learned to love, and above all, there are your parents, relations, and friends.

Can you picture to yourselves a time when none of these lovely things existed? I think not! Older and wiser heads than yours have striven to grasp that idea, and have failed; and no wonder, for it is only God himself, the Creator of the world, who can do so.

God is from everlasting, and will be everlasting; but once there was no world, and some day the world will have passed away. We cannot understand this now—God does not mean us to do so—but we know that it is true, for he, the author of truth, has said so.

In the beginning God created heaven and earth.

At first the earth was without form and empty—that is to say, there were no trees or plants of any kind and no living creatures, and everything was wrapped in darkness.

THE SEVEN DAYS

Then God created light. You have always been used to the light, and, therefore, perhaps you will not understand what a glorious gift this is. Those who are born blind and have never known the light still have a yearning for it; but those who have once possessed sight and have lost it would tell you that it is the greatest blessing God has bestowed upon us. It is for this reason that our Saviour, when he came to us, was called "The Light of the World."

On the second day God created the firmament—that means the sky and the space in which the clouds are formed.

On the third day he gathered together the waters, and formed them into seas and rivers. Then he created trees, shrubs, herbs, flowers, and grass, each of them yielding seed to preserve its kind.

Any little child who has ever had a garden to tend will know that when the summer is past, and the flowers begin to droop and die, there are always seeds to be gathered from them, which will, if carefully planted, spring up and bloom another year, and in their turn produce other seeds, so that even the flowers are types of eternity.

On the fourth day God said, "Let the sun and the moon and the stars appear," and they came at his bidding, the sun to cheer us by day, and the moon and the stars by night. I wonder if you have ever tried to count the stars? If you have, you did not succeed, for no one but God knows their number. They sparkle and shine in the sky, teaching us to look upward and remember their Maker, and it seems to me that they say to you as you watch them: "Children of earth, strive to be like us. Bring light into the world: there is plenty of dark sorrow yet, which each little human star may lighten with love and sympathy if it will."

It was on the fifth day that God created the inhabitants of the waters. God said: "Let the waters bring forth abundantly," and at once the seas and rivers were filled with fish and all the other creatures which live in the water. The birds and all other kinds of winged things were formed upon this day also.

On the sixth day God created all the creatures that move on the earth; and lastly God made man to be lord over every other creature, and the name of the first man was Adam.

We are told that "God created man in his own image"—that is to say, he gave man a soul or spirit, which can never perish as the beasts of the field perish: our bodies die, but our spirits return to the God who gave them.

ADAM AND EVE IN EDEN

And God planted a beautiful garden in Eden in which Adam might live, and, because he did not wish him to be alone in the world he had given him, he created a woman to be his helpmeet, and the name of the first woman was Eve.

On the seventh day God ceased from his work of creation, and he blessed the seventh day and made it holy, and he wishes us to keep it holy too.

God brought all the creatures he had made to Adam, that he might give them names, and he told Adam that everything which he had created, with one exception, was for his use and pleasure. The one exception was a tree in the midst of the garden, which God called "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." This tree he forbade them to touch.

With so much to please and delight them, you would think that Adam and Eve would not have wished to taste the fruit of this tree; but, alas! the Evil Spirit tempted them, and they fell. The Bible tells us that this Evil Spirit came in the form of a serpent, and first tempted Eve. She forgot how good God had been, and disobeyed him in eating the fruit; then she went to her husband and gave him some of the fruit, and he also ate it.

When they had done this they began to be afraid, and when they heard God's voice they went and hid themselves. Oh, how foolish this was! No one can hide from God's all-seeing eye. When they knew that God had found them they tried to excuse themselves. Adam said, "The woman gave me of the tree, and I did eat"; and Eve said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

PUNISHMENT OF THE FIRST SIN

God did not heed their excuses, but said that he would no longer allow them to dwell in the beautiful garden of innocence he had given them, because, having eaten of the tree of knowledge, they were no longer pure and innocent. To the Evil Spirit who had tempted them he said, "The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head."

Then God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, and placed cherubim at the gateway, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to prevent their ever returning to it. So they were driven by their own sin out into the dreary world, where they were to work hard for their living, and where every thorn and thistle that sprang up to mar their crops should remind them of their offence and God's anger.

Adam and Eve had now brought sin into the world, and sin is like an ill weed, which thrives more quickly than good grain. God gave Adam and Eve two sons, named Cain and Abel. Cain grew up to be cruel and wicked. He was a husbandman—that is, a man who tills the ground—while his brother Abel was a shepherd.

THE CRIME OF CAIN

God had told Adam and Eve that they were to set apart certain days for worship and sacrifice, and when Abel came to offer his sacrifice he brought the best that he had, the finest lamb in all his flock, for he thought that nothing could be too good to offer to God, the giver of all. And God was pleased with his sacrifice and accepted it. This made Cain very angry and very jealous. He, too, had brought his offering of fruit, but God had said that the sacrifice should be a lamb; besides which, he knew that Cain's gift was grudgingly given, and, therefore, he would not accept it.

I do not think Cain's hatred of his brother could have been of sudden growth. Abel had always been gentle and loving, and Cain wild and disobedient; and little by little he must have grown more angry with and jealous of his brother, because he knew that Abel was good, while he was wicked. Then when God rejected his offering and accepted Abel's, he could no longer contain his wrath, and he struck his brother and killed him.

Then God said to Cain, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" And Cain answered, "I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" How could he hope to deceive God by a lie? God reads all the secrets of our hearts, and he now told Cain that he knew all that had happened, and that as a punishment he would drive him forth from his home, a fugitive and a vagabond on the face of the earth.

Cain begged for mercy, and one mercy God granted him—time for repentance. He might have chosen to take Cain's life for that of Abel, but he did not do so. Cain wandered away, lonely and wretched. Let us trust that as the years rolled by he repented and became sorry for his sin.

THE GREAT FLOOD

As the number of people on the earth began to multiply, so also did wickedness increase, until at length God looked down from heaven and was so grieved that, the Bible tells us, he repented that he had ever made man.

And God said that he would destroy both man and every living thing upon the face of the earth.

But there was one good man, named Noah, and God, Who is ever merciful, sent Noah to preach to the people, hoping that they would repent. They did not do so, and so God bade Noah build an ark—that is, a kind of ship—which was to be large enough to hold, not only Noah and his family, but also two of every kind of animal; for God told Noah that he would presently send a great flood upon the earth, which would drown every creature that was not in the ark.

THE ARK AND ITS VOYAGE

So Noah set to work to build the ark. It took a hundred and twenty years to build, and during that time Noah never ceased preaching to the people and begging them to repent. But they only mocked him, for every day the sun shone, and season by season they gathered their harvests, taking so much from the hand of the God of mercy that they forgot he was also a God of justice.

When the ark was finished God bade Noah and his family enter it, and then, just as he had brought the animals to Adam to be named, God now brought them to the ark to be safe there when the flood should come. Even then God was still ready to pity and pardon. He waited yet another seven days, lest the people should repent and be sorry for their sins.

But when he saw that their hearts were still hardened against him he bade the rain-clouds burst, and the rain began to fall. Not in gentle showers, but in torrents and torrents of water, it came down from heaven, swelling the seas and rivers until the whole earth was covered with water. There was no escape for the unhappy people who had offended God, though they might climb to the top of the highest mountain. God's wrath overtook them there, for the waters of the great flood left no single spot uncovered.

For forty days and nights the rain fell, and then it ceased; but the flood did not go down for a hundred and fifty days, and all that long time the ark floated safely upon the waters. Then, little by little, the waters decreased, until on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark rested upon the mountain of Ararat, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains could be seen.

WHAT THE DOVE FOUND

Forty days after the ark rested on the mountain of Ararat, Noah opened a window and sent out a raven, which flew to and fro continually. Then he sent out a dove to see if the waters were abated; but the dove found no resting-place, for the waters still covered the earth, and the poor weary bird came back to the ark, and Noah put out his hand and took her in.

In seven days' time Noah again sent out the dove, and all day long she flew about in the fresh air; but in the evening she came back, carrying an olive-branch in her beak. By that token Noah knew that the waters were gradually going down. He waited another seven days, and then again he sent out the dove, and this time she did not return, and Noah knew that the waters no longer covered the earth.

Noah did not at once leave the ark. He and his sons removed the roof that they might be able to see the land; but they waited nearly two months, so that the ground might be quite dry. Then God said to Noah: "Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee"; and they left the ark, taking all the animals that had been there with them.

THE MEANING OF THE RAINBOW

Then Noah built an altar and offered up a sacrifice to God, in token of his gratitude to him for having saved him and his family from the flood. God was pleased with this offering, and he made a covenant with Noah. A covenant is a promise. This was God's promise: He said that never again would he utterly destroy the earth by a flood, and as a token of his promise he said that he would set his bow in the heavens whenever he sent rain upon the earth.

Most of you have seen a lovely rainbow in the sky. It reaches from earth to heaven and seems to join the two. The next time you see one, think of God's promise, and thank him for all his love, remembering that while we carry the thought of God in our hearts heaven is as near as the rainbow seems to bring it.

Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. This seems a very long time to us, does it not? But in those days, when there were so few people upon the earth, God granted them longer life than he gives us.

THE UNFINISHED TOWER

All the people at that time spoke one language, and this might have continued until now had it not been that as the years passed the people began to grow wicked again, and to forget all that God had done for them and the promise he had made.

They were so proud that they wished to remain a great nation for ever and ever, and, lest God should send another flood or destroy them in some other way, they determined to build a great city, with a tower in it whose top should reach to heaven, and in which they could take refuge whenever any evil befell them.

But God looked from heaven and saw the city and the tower they were building so busily; and he said that if they were allowed to finish their work their pride and arrogance would increase; and they would forget him altogether. And in order to prevent this God "confounded their language"—that is to say, he made them all speak different tongues, so that they could not understand one another, and they could not go on building their great city and tower.

You can understand, if you were suddenly placed with a number of people who could not speak one word of English and whose language you had never heard before, how miserable you would feel, and how you would long to get back to the friends whose language you could understand. These people felt just the same; they sought out those whose speech was the same as their own, and wandered away with them, and by degrees they became scattered all over the earth and founded the different nations that exist now.

The great tower they had commenced to build was called the "Tower of Babel," because it was there the Lord changed the language of all the people.

ABRAHAM

God was very angry with his people, for many of them had left off worshiping him, and had made idols of wood and stone, which they pretended were gods and to which they prayed. They also worshiped the sun, moon, and stars, besides all kinds of beasts and birds. So God determined to choose from the people one man who would really love and serve him, and the man he chose was called Abram. God afterward changed his name to Abraham, which means the father of a great multitude.

God told Abraham to leave his home and kindred, for he did not wish his chosen servants to live among idolaters, and he promised that he should be the founder of a nation, and that he would make his name great and would bless him and his descendants forever.

God also promised that his children should inherit the land of Canaan, the Promised Land, as it was afterward called.

Abraham did not doubt God's wisdom in sending him away into a strange country, and did not attempt to disobey him. He set out at once with Sarah, his wife, and Lot, his nephew, and they journeyed together until they came to the land of Canaan. But God did not mean them to possess the land at once, and so they went on and on until they came to the land of Egypt. Even there they did not rest long, but traveled back to the land of Canaan. Abraham and Lot had many flocks and herds and many servants to tend them, and it chanced that a quarrel arose between Lot's servants and Abraham's servants, for they all wished to lead their own particular herds into the best pastures.

THE PARTING OF ABRAHAM AND LOT

So Abraham said to Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, or between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren." And he bade Lot choose any part of the land for himself, and said that he, Abraham, would choose another, for it would be better for them to separate than to quarrel.

Lot chose the country near the river Jordan, for it was very fruitful and lovely "as the Garden of the Lord," the Bible says. And then he left Abraham and went to live in the country he had chosen, and pitched his tents near the city of Sodom. This was wrong of Lot, because the people of Sodom were very wicked, and he should not have gone to live with them just because their country was a rich one.

But Lot was punished for the choice he made. A number of kings came and fought against Sodom and other wicked cities, and they plundered the cities and carried away the inhabitants as captives, and with them they took Lot and his family.

When Abraham heard of this he armed his servants and pursued the kings, and when he had overtaken them he attacked and beat them, and brought back Lot, besides a number of other captives, and all the goods that had been taken.

It was the custom in those days for men to have more than one wife, and Abraham's second wife was called Hagar. For a long time Abraham had had no children, but at length God sent Hagar a little son, whom they called Ishmael.

THE WICKED CITIES

Soon after Ishmael was born a very terrible thing happened. The cities of the plain, of which Sodom was one, had become so terribly wicked that God determined to destroy them, for the people who inhabited them were not fit to live in that beautiful country.

God told Abraham what he meant to do, and Abraham thought of Lot and his family, and was anxious to save them. So he humbled himself before God and prayed him to spare the cities. He said that perhaps there might be fifty righteous people in the cities, and they would perish with the wicked. God said that he would spare the cities if fifty, forty, or even twenty good men could be found in them.

Abraham could not find twenty good men, and then he begged God to spare them for the sake of ten. This God promised to do, but there were not even ten. Abraham then asked God to save Lot and his family, and God sent two angels to Sodom to bid Lot warn his relations to leave the city; but they mocked him, and would not believe the message the angels brought. Then the angels told Lot to hasten away at once, and take his family with him, but even he lingered awhile until the angels took him by the hand and led him, his wife, and their two daughters out of the city, and the angels said: "Escape for thy life. Look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain. Escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

Then Lot hastened away, and when the sun rose in the morning God rained down fire and brimstone from heaven upon the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, in which there had not been found even ten good men. And they were utterly destroyed, and all the other cities of the plain also.

Lot remembered what the angel had said to him; but his wife did not. She looked back regretfully toward the city where her home had been, and immediately she became a pillar of salt.

There is no vestige of these guilty cities left. The place on which they stood is covered to this day with a lake called the Dead Sea. The waters of this lake are salt and bitter, and no plants or trees will grow near it. It is a gloomy and sad-looking spot.

THE SONS OF ABRAHAM

I TOLD you that Abraham had one son, called Ishmael. God had told him that, although Ishmael would be the father of many princes, he did not intend him to be the father of the great nation to whom he had promised the land of Canaan as an inheritance. He said he would give him another son, who should found this nation. Soon after this promise God gave Abraham's first wife, Sarah, a son, and they called this son Isaac.

One day Sarah saw Ishmael behaving unkindly to her little son Isaac, and this made her very angry indeed. I think most likely she was jealous of Ishmael also, for she did not want her son to share Abraham's possessions with Hagar's son, as Hagar was only a slave. So she went to Abraham and begged him to send both Hagar and Ishmael away. Abraham did not wish to do this. Indeed, it seemed a very cruel thing to do, for driven away into the desert, there would be little chance of the woman and her son finding food and drink, and they would be almost sure to perish.

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

BUT God told Abraham to have no fear, for he would take care of them, and he might therefore do as Sarah begged him. So in the morning Abraham took some bread and a bottle of water, and, placing them upon Hagar's shoulders, sent her and her child away into the desert.

They wandered on and on, with the fierce sun beating down upon their heads, making them so thirsty that they very soon drank up all the water in their bottle, and then, search as they might, they could find no more. At length Ishmael sank down exhausted, and Hagar carried him to where a shrub grew, so that the shade from it might shield him a little from the sun. Then, because she could not bear to see him die, she went a little way off and hid her face. But in his agony Ishmael called to God to help him, and God heard him and sent an angel to Hagar who bade her have no fear, for God would save her son. And then the angel showed her a well of water, and she filled her bottle and carried it to the poor dying boy, and he revived, and soon grew quite well again.

Hagar and Ishmael lived in the wilderness for many years, for God taught Ishmael to become a great archer, so that he could provide food for himself and his mother, and when he grew up he married a woman from the land of Egypt, and it is from him that the wandering tribes of Arabs are descended.

As Abraham's second son, Isaac, grew up from babyhood into youth Abraham loved him more and more dearly, until God feared lest he might become an idol to him, and determined to try his servant's faith.

THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

ONE day God said to Abraham: "Take thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

God seemed to wish to make the sacrifice as hard as possible. He reminded Abraham that Ishmael was lost to him and only Isaac remained.

"Thine only son," he said. Then he dwelt upon the fact that Abraham loved him so dearly, and he also sent him three days' journey in order that he might have time to think of the sacrifice he was about to make. It is sometimes easier to give up something to God if we can do it in a moment, without time to think how we shall afterward miss that which we are giving up. God did not make Abraham's trial easier to him in this way; he had three whole days to think of what his loss would be. And yet, not for a moment did he hesitate. He set out upon that sad journey, taking with him everything that was needful for the sacrifice. When he came near to the mountain which God appointed as the one he had chosen, Abraham told his servants to await him there, and he and Isaac went on alone.

Isaac must have wondered what his father meant to do, for he had bidden him carry wood, while Abraham himself carried fire, with which to kindle the wood as for a sacrifice, and so he asked, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb."

When they came to the place which God had told Abraham of, he made an altar of stones, and put the wood upon it; then he bound Isaac and laid him upon the wood, and took the knife in his hand to slay him.

But God did not mean to try his servant further. He knew now that Abraham loved him better even than his own dear son, and he sent an angel to prevent him from harming Isaac. "Lay not thine hand upon the lad; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me," the angel said. Oh! how joyfully Abraham hastened to release his son, and, seeing a ram close by, caught by its horns in a thicket, he took it and offered it up to God in place of his son.

God was so pleased with Abraham for his great faith and obedience that he blessed him very richly, promising that Isaac's descendants should be in number like the stars of the heavens and as the sand upon the seashore.

THE CHOOSING OF REBEKAH

Some twelve years after this event Isaac's mother, Sarah, died, and Abraham bought a beautiful burying-place, called the cave of Machpelah, in which to lay her body. Abraham was now a very old man, and he was anxious to see his son Isaac married before he died; but he did not wish him to marry one of the women of Canaan, for they worshiped idols. So he called his servant Eliezer and told him to visit his brother's family at the city of Nahor, and there choose a wife for his son.

Eliezer set out upon his journey, taking with him ten of his master's camels laden with gold and jewels and presents of various kinds. When he reached the city he noticed a well of water, and there he alighted to rest, and to watch the maidens who came to the well, for he thought that one of them might be suited to be Isaac's wife.

Eliezer was so afraid that he might not choose wisely that he prayed to God to help him. He said: "Let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, 'Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink,' and she shall say, 'Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also,' let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac."

God granted Eliezer's prayer, for presently, when the maidens came to the well to draw water, there was one among them called Rebekah, a granddaughter of Abraham's brother, and she was very beautiful, and looked good and modest. So Eliezer asked her to draw water for him to drink, and when she had done this she saw the poor weary camels looking eagerly at the water, and she said, "I will draw water for thy camels also."

Then Eliezer knew that this maiden was chosen to be Isaac's wife, and he gave her some of the jewels and rich presents he had brought with him, and asked her to take him home with her, that he might speak to her family.

Eliezer was still more pleased when he found whose daughter she was. He spoke to her brother Laban, and to her father, and asked their consent to her being Isaac's wife. As both they and Rebekah were willing, Eliezer begged her to make no delay, but to return with him at once. He gave presents of jewels of silver and gold and fine raiment to Rebekah, and many precious things to her relations, and then set out upon his journey home. Isaac was in the fields at eveningtime when he saw Eliezer and Rebekah coming, and he went forward to meet them. Rebekah covered herself with a veil when she saw him coming, which was considered a token of modesty.

Soon afterward Isaac and Rebekah were married and lived happily together for many years. Abraham did not live long after Isaac's marriage, and when he died his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him beside Sarah, his wife, in the cave of Machpelah.

ESAU AND JACOB

Isaac and Rebekah had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was a hunter, and was often away from home for a long time in pursuit of venison; but Jacob stayed at home and tilled the fields. One day Esau had been hunting for so long that he had become quite faint for want of food, and, seeing Jacob in the fields, he begged him to give him some. Jacob would not do so until Esau promised to sell him his birthright—that is, his right as an elder son. Esau reasoned with himself that he would most certainly die unless he obtained food, and that his birthright would then be of no use to him, and so he consented to sell it to Jacob for some bread and some pottage of lentils.

It was wrong of Jacob to take such an advantage of his hungry brother; but Esau ought not to have sold the birthright God had given him.

Isaac loved Esau very dearly; but Rebekah loved Jacob best, and was anxious that he should obtain the greater portion of his father's possessions.

JACOB'S TRICKY DECEIT

When Isaac was an old man and his eyes so dim that he could not distinguish between his two sons, he called Esau to him and bade him take his bow and quiver and go into the fields and shoot some venison, then dress it and bring it to him that he might eat it and bless him before he died.

Esau at once went to do his father's bidding, but Rebekah had heard what her husband had said, and she called Jacob to her and told him what Isaac had said to Esau. She bade Jacob fetch two kids from the flock and bring them to her, and she would dress them in such a way that Isaac would think they were venison. When she had done this she gave the dish to Jacob to carry in to his father, saying that he was Esau.

Now, it happened that Jacob's skin was very smooth and soft, while Esau's was rough and hairy, so Rebekah covered Jacob's hands and neck with the skins of the goats, and then he carried the meat in to his father, and told him that he was Esau, his eldest son. Isaac could not understand how it was that the venison had been found so quickly; but Jacob wickedly told him that God had found it for him.

Isaac still doubted, and bade Jacob come near that he might touch him. Then he said, "The voice is Jacob's voice; but the hands are the hands of Esau." And again he asked him, "Art thou my very son Esau?" When Jacob answered "Yes," he took the meat prepared for him and ate it, and then blessed him. "God give thee," he said, "of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee."

When Isaac's blessing had been given and Jacob had left him, Esau came to his father with the savory meat he had prepared. Then Isaac was very grieved, for he knew that he had been deceived and had given away the blessing intended for his best-loved son.

And Esau cried bitterly, "Bless me, even me also, O my father." Isaac told him that it was no longer in his power to give him all the good things he had given to his brother; but that he, too, should be blessed, and that he should one day break his brother's yoke from off his neck—that is to say, that his brother should not always be lord over him.

Esau was so angry with Jacob that he made up his mind to kill him as soon as Isaac was dead, and so Rebekah sent Jacob away, and told him to go to her brother Laban and stay with him until Esau had forgotten his anger.

JACOB'S LADDER

Jacob set out at once; but when night fell he was not nearly at his journey's end, and so he lay down on the ground, and, making himself a pillow of stones, he fell asleep. While he slept he had a wonderful dream. He thought he saw a ladder set up on the earth, whose top reached to heaven; and on the ladder were angels, and God himself stood at the top of the ladder and promised to bless him, and to give him the land upon which he was then lying.

When Jacob awoke he felt sure that God had been with him, and he took the stones which had formed his pillow, and made a pillar of them to God's honor, and he called the place Bethel, which means the "House of God."

JACOB'S TWICE-EARNED WIFE

Then Jacob went on with his journey, and when he came to Laban's home and told him that he was Rebekah's son he was treated with great kindness. He agreed to work for Laban, and instead of asking wages, he begged that Laban would give him his youngest daughter, Rachel, for a wife. Laban said he must first work seven years for her; but when Jacob had done this Laban would not let him marry Rachel, but gave him her elder sister, Leah, instead.

Jacob loved Rachel so dearly that he agreed to serve Laban another seven years if he would then allow him to marry her, for most men in those days had more than one wife. This he did, and Rachel became his wife. After that Jacob continued to work for Laban, who rewarded him by giving him cattle and sheep.

From the painting by H. Schopin.

JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS.

JOSEPH WAS SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS TO A CARAVAN OF ISHMAELITES. THEY CARRIED JOSEPH WITH THEM TO EGYPT, WHERE THEY SOLD HIM AS A SLAVE, AND WHERE HE HAD A VERY WONDERFUL CAREER.

Jacob was very prosperous, and became so rich that Laban was envious of him, and treated him so unkindly that Jacob collected all his property and set out secretly with his wives and children to return to his own country. Laban pursued him, but God would not allow him to hurt Jacob in any way. When he had gone some distance on his way he heard that Esau was coming to meet him, bringing many armed men with him, and Jacob prayed God to save him and his family from Esau's anger. And in order to soften his brother's heart he divided his flocks and herds and sent presents of them to Esau.

"ISRAEL, A PRINCE OF GOD"

For some time it happened that Jacob was left quite alone, and God appeared to him, and Jacob entreated God to bless him. The Bible tells us that he wrestled with God, saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And God blessed him and said that his name should no longer be Jacob, but Israel, which means "A Prince of God." When Jacob went on to meet his brother he was sadly afraid that in his revenge Esau might not only harm him, but his wives and children also. He had eleven sons and one daughter, and best of all he loved Joseph, who was Rachel's only son.

Jacob put Rachel and her son in what he hoped might be a place of safety; but he need have had no fear, for as soon as Esau saw his brother he forgot all the wrong he had ever done him, and only remembered the days when they had loved each other dearly, and he put his arms round his neck and kissed him, and wept for joy. Soon after this God gave Rachel another little son, who was called Benjamin, and whom Jacob loved almost as dearly as he loved Joseph, and then, to his great grief, Rachel died.

Not long after this Isaac died; he was a very old man, having lived a hundred and eighty years, and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him. Jacob remained in the land of Canaan, but Esau went away, because they were both very rich men, and as the riches in those days consisted chiefly of sheep and cattle, there would not have been sufficient pasture-lands to feed their flocks if they had remained together.

JOSEPH

I told you that Jacob and Rachel had a son called Joseph, whom Jacob loved better than any of his sons. To show his love for him Jacob made him a coat of many colors, which was considered a great honor in Eastern countries. Joseph's brothers were very jealous when they found what their father had done. They were older than Joseph, and thought that such a mark of honor should have been given to one of them.

Then Joseph had two wonderful dreams, which were the cause of still further jealousy. He dreamt that he was binding sheaves of wheat in a field with his brothers, and suddenly his sheaf stood upright, while the sheaves his brothers had bound stood all around and bowed down to it. In the second dream it appeared to him as if the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him. Joseph told these dreams to his brothers and they in their turn told them to their father. They thought, no doubt, that Jacob would punish Joseph for pretending to be greater than they were; but Jacob felt the dreams had been sent by God as a sign that he meant to raise his son to be a great ruler.

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

Now, Joseph's brothers were shepherds, and Jacob sent them with their flocks to a place called Shechem. When they had been gone some little time he called Joseph to him and told him to go and visit his brothers and see if they and their flocks were well and thriving. But when Joseph came to Shechem he could not find them, and wandered about for some time until he met a man who told him that they had left that place and driven their flocks to the pastures of Dothan.

Joseph followed them and presently saw his brothers in the distance. They saw him, too, when he was still a long way off, and determined to be revenged upon him because their father loved him better than he did them.

At first they could not make up their minds how to punish him, but at last they were so very wicked as to say they would kill him and throw him down a deep pit and then pretend to their father that a wild beast had killed and eaten him.

But it happened that one of them, named Reuben, was not so cruel as the others, and he determined to save Joseph. So he persuaded them to put him down into the pit without harming him, meaning afterward to take Joseph out and send him back to his father. So the brothers did as Reuben advised them and cast Joseph into an empty pit, after taking his coat of many colors from him.

Then they sat down to enjoy their midday meal, and before they had finished it they saw a company of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, their camels laden with spices and precious things. One of the brothers, who was named Judah, said to the rest: "What profit is it if we slay our brother? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites."

So they drew Joseph out of the pit, and sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, who carried him away to Egypt.

Reuben had not sat down to eat with the others, so he did not know what they had done, and when he found that Joseph was no longer in the pit he was terribly grieved. But the cruel brothers took Joseph's coat and dipped it in the blood of a kid and carried it to their father and told him that a wild beast had devoured him. And for many a long day Jacob mourned for his dear son, and would not be comforted.

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

The Ishmaelites carried Joseph into Egypt with them and sold him to one of Pharaoh's officers, named Potiphar. He served Potiphar so faithfully that in time he made him the head of his household; but he offended Potiphar's wife, who was a very wicked woman, and she accused him falsely and persuaded her husband to put him in prison.

It happened that Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker were in the same prison, and they each had a very strange dream, which Joseph was able to interpret for them. The butler's dream meant that in three days' time he would be forgiven and sent for to serve at Pharaoh's table; but the baker's dream, he said, meant that he would be hanged. This came to pass, and before the butler left the prison Joseph begged him to remember him and try to obtain his pardon.

But the butler forgot Joseph until it chanced that Pharaoh dreamed two very strange dreams, which no one could interpret for him. Then the butler remembered Joseph, and he told Pharaoh how truthfully he had interpreted both his and the baker's dream.

So Pharaoh sent for Joseph and told him his two dreams. The first was that seven fat kine—that is, cattle—were feeding in a meadow and that seven lean kine came and ate them up. And the second dream was of seven good ears of corn which sprang up, but were devoured by seven thin ones. Joseph said these dreams meant that there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. And he advised Pharaoh to choose some wise man to buy and store up all the corn he could during the years of plenty, so that during the years of famine there might still be corn in Egypt.

Pharaoh chose Joseph himself to do this, and he was so pleased with his sense and wisdom that he made him ruler over all the land.

WHAT JOSEPH DID FOR HIS FATHER AND BROTHERS

When the years of famine came Jacob and his family were in want of bread, and so he sent ten of his sons into Egypt to buy corn. They were brought before Joseph, who knew them again at once, but they did not recognize him. He pretended he thought they were spies, and questioned them about their home. When they told him that they had a brother, Benjamin, at home, he said they were to go and fetch him, to prove that what they had said was true. He kept one brother, Simeon, and told them that he should be a hostage until they brought Benjamin. Then he bade his servants fill their sacks with corn, and the money they paid for it he ordered to be hidden in the sacks' mouths.

So the brothers went home; but when they told Jacob that the ruler they had seen in Egypt wished them to bring Benjamin to him he would not consent. But at last, when all the corn was eaten, Jacob was obliged to let him go, for the brothers would not go to Egypt without him.

When they came before Joseph and he saw Benjamin, he longed to take him in his arms and weep for joy, for Benjamin was his very own brother, the son of Rachel, Joseph's mother. He asked the brothers if their father was well, and was very kind and gracious to them.

In the morning their sacks were filled with corn, and they set out on their way home. But Joseph had ordered one of his servants to hide his silver cup in Benjamin's sack, and when the brothers had gone a little way he sent after them and accused them of stealing it. The brothers denied having stolen the cup; but when search was made it was found in Benjamin's sack, so they were taken back and brought before Joseph. Joseph said he would keep Benjamin as a slave, but that the others might go back to their home.

Then Judah spoke very earnestly to Joseph and begged him to send Benjamin home and to keep him as a slave in his stead. He told Joseph that Jacob had already lost one son whom he dearly loved, and that if they went home without Benjamin the poor old man would die of grief. Then Joseph burst into tears and confessed that he was their brother.

The brothers were ashamed to look at him; but Joseph told them that he forgave them all their wicked treatment of him, since God had ordered all things for the best. He sent them to fetch their father and their flocks and herds into Egypt, so that they might have plenty to eat while the famine lasted.

At first Jacob could not believe the good news;

but when he saw the wagons Joseph had sent to carry him and his possessions to Egypt he said: "It is enough! Joseph my son is yet alive." Joseph went to meet his father, and greeted him very tenderly, and took him into Pharaoh's presence. And Pharaoh bade Joseph choose the best part of the land of Egypt and give it to his father and brothers. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen years, and before he died he made Joseph promise that he would not bury him in Egypt, but would carry him back to the land of Canaan. Joseph lived to be a hundred and ten years old, and when he died he also wished to be buried in Canaan. This was eventually done, but he was at first buried in Egypt.

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN BONDAGE

MANY years after Joseph's death a very wicked king reigned over the land of Egypt, who was also called Pharaoh. The Children of Israel, as Jacob's descendants were called, had increased so greatly in numbers that this wicked Pharaoh was afraid they would one day rise up against him and take his kingdom from him. He had treated the Israelites so cruelly that it was no wonder he was afraid of them; and now he ordered all the little boy-babies to be taken and thrown into the river Nile, so that they could not grow up and fight against him. There was one poor mother who loved her little baby so dearly that she managed to hide him for three months; and then, because she could do so no longer, she made a little basket of bulrushes and put her baby in it and hid the basket among the reeds on the river bank.

MOSES AND PHARAOH

THERE he was found by Pharaoh's daughter when she and her maidens came to bathe in the river, and he was so pretty and sweet that she could not bear to think that he might be drowned by her father's cruel soldiers, and so she determined to take him home and bring him up as her own son. The little boy was afterward called Moses, and he was chosen by God to deliver the Children of Israel from bondage.

He grew up in Pharaoh's household, but when he became a man he would no longer be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, for his own dear mother, who had come to the palace to be his nurse, had taught him that it was wicked to be a worshiper of idols, and that there was but one true and living God.

Pharaoh was very angry with Moses because he took part with the oppressed people; but Moses did not fear his wrath, for God himself had appeared to him on Mount Horeb in a flaming bush, and had told him to go to Pharaoh and bid him, in God's name, to let the people go.

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

PHARAOH answered proudly, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?" and he would not let the people go. Then, to punish him, God sent terrible plagues upon Egypt. He turned all the waters into blood, so that the people had nothing to drink. But still Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go. Then God sent a plague of frogs, and Pharaoh sent for Moses and his brother Aaron and told them that, if they would ask God to make the plague cease, he would let the Israelites go.

But no sooner was this done than Pharaoh again hardened his heart, and treated the Israelites more cruelly than ever. Then God sent plagues of lice and flies, and after that he caused all the cattle belonging to the Egyptians to die, and then he sent terrible boils which covered the bodies of both men and beasts. He also sent plagues of hail and thunder and darkness, and locusts, which ate up every blade of grass in the country. Several times Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and promised that if only the plague should cease he would let the Children of Israel go; but as soon as the plagues were taken away he forgot his promise and would not let them go.

Then God sent the worst punishment of all. He bade the Israelites kill a lamb and sprinkle some of its blood on the door-posts of their houses, for he was about to send his angel to kill all the first-born of the Egyptians, and he would bid the messenger of death pass by those houses on which the blood was sprinkled. And at midnight the destroying angel passed through the land, and when morning dawned there was not one Egyptian home in which there was not some one dead.

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SET FREE

THEN at length the Egyptians bade the Children of Israel depart in haste, for they were afraid that they would all die if they kept them any longer. So the Israelites set out, taking with them their cattle and all they possessed, and also they carried away the body of Joseph to bury it in the land of Canaan. And God gave them a pillar of cloud to guide them by day and a pillar of fire to guide them by night.

They had not gone very far when Pharaoh began to wish that he had refused to let them go, and he called all his soldiers together, and ordered them to bring chariots and horses, for he meant to pursue the Israelites and bring them back to be his slaves.

When the Israelites knew that Pharaoh and his hosts were pursuing them they were very much afraid, for they had no weapons with which to fight and before them stretched the waters of the Red Sea, so that there seemed to be no way of escape. They began to complain and to be sorry that they had ever left Egypt, for they had brought away with them many jewels and golden ornaments which God had told them to take from the Egyptians, and they thought that this must have made them very angry, and they would be still more cruel than they had been before. So the Israelites said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that thou hast brought us out?" But Moses answered, "Fear not. The Lord shall fight for you."

God then bade Moses tell the Israelites to go forward. They did so; but it seemed to them they must be marching straight into the sea. But when they reached it God sent a strong east wind that divided the waters so that they stood up like a wall on the right hand and on the left, and the Israelites passed over to the other side of the sea on dry ground. The Egyptians followed closely behind them, but when the last of the Israelites were in safety God sent another wind which caused the waters to roll back again, and Pharaoh and his horsemen were all drowned in the sea.

IN THE WILDERNESS

The Israelites had no further fear of pursuit after God had destroyed Pharaoh and his hosts; but very soon they again began to complain because they were very often hungry and thirsty. For three days they had been traveling through a desert place and had had no water at all, and then when they came to some it was so bitter that they could not drink it. But God showed Moses a certain tree and told him to cast it into the water, and when he had done this it became quite sweet.

Throughout the whole of the time the Children of Israel were wandering through the wilderness toward the Promised Land they never ceased murmuring against Moses for having brought them out of the land of Egypt. They seemed to forget all the hardships they had borne there, and to remember only the discomforts they met with on their journey; and for this reason God became so angry with them at length that he said only a chosen few out of all that had left the land of Egypt should ever reach the land of Canaan, and so he kept them wandering in the wilderness for a great many years, and it was the children of those who had been in bondage in Egypt who finally possessed the Promised Land.

But during all those long years of wandering God was very good to them. When they were hungry he sent down bread from heaven. This bread they called "manna." It fell down like dew, and became round, and white, and solid, so that they could gather it up. God said they were to gather it fresh every day, except on the sixth day, when they were ordered to gather sufficient to last for the Sabbath day also. After a time they grumbled because they grew tired of eating manna, and then God sent them quails to eat.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Another time when they were almost dying of thirst God bade Moses strike the rock which was near him, and at once a stream of clear fresh water burst forth. When their enemies attacked them God fought their battles for them, and gave them the victory, and yet they were not grateful. Then God determined to speak to them again through Moses, and remind them of all he had done for them. And so, when they came to the wilderness of Sinai, God spoke to Moses from Mount Sinai so that all the people could hear and believe. God's voice was like a trumpet, and the whole mountain was hid with fire and trembled. And then God called to Moses to come to him upon the mountain. He went, but the sight of God's majesty was so terrible that even that brave man Moses shook with fear. God gave him two tables of stone, upon which he had written the Ten Commandments, which he ordered the people to keep faithfully.

He also said that the people were to build a large tabernacle for his service and to make an altar and offer burnt sacrifices to him upon it. And he told Moses to anoint Aaron and his sons for priests, and to clothe them with garments suitable to be worn in the house of God. In the tabernacle was to be placed the Ark of the Covenant, which was a small chest covered with gold; the lid of it was to be called "the mercy-seat"; and the tables of law which the Lord had given to Moses were to be placed in the ark.

Moses was speaking with God upon Mount Sinai for so long a time that the people again began to doubt. They came to Aaron and said: "This Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." They thought that if Moses had been taken away God would be sure to forsake them, and so they asked Aaron to give them other gods to worship.

THE GOLDEN CALF

Aaron bade them bring their golden ornaments to him and he would make them an idol. And when they had done so he melted down the ornaments and made the figure of a calf from the gold and set it up, telling the people to worship that.

The Bible does not tell us how such a good man as Aaron, a man whom God had chosen for his own priest, came to commit such a terrible sin. Some people think that he may have made the calf in mockery, just to see if the people would be so foolish as to worship a senseless image. When Moses came down from the mount and saw the people worshiping the golden calf he was so angry that he threw down the two tables of stone on which the laws were written, and broke them. And he took the golden calf and burned it and ground it into powder, and he mixed the powder with water and forced the people to drink it.

And then Moses called to the people and said: "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me." And all the sons of Levi came and stood by his side, and he bade them take swords and kill all those wicked men who preferred to worship idols instead of the good God who had treated them so kindly and cared for them in their wanderings.

Now that Moses had broken the tables of stone God had given them, there were no laws for the people; but God told him to make two other tables of stone and to bring them to him upon Mount Sinai.

Moses did this, and God came down from heaven in a cloud and spoke with Moses and told him to write his laws upon the tables of stone. Moses was forty days and nights with the Lord upon Mount Sinai, and he wrote the words of the ten commandments upon the tables of stone as God told them to him. And when he came down the mountain with the commandments his face shone with the glory of the Lord, so that the people were afraid, and Moses had to cover his face with a veil while he taught them God's commandments.

Soon after that Moses ordered the tabernacle to be built, and the people brought all kinds of precious things and gave them to the builders, so that God's house should be as beautiful as it was holy. This they did, hoping that God would accept their free-will offerings and forgive them for all their former wickedness.

THE PROMISED LAND

When the Israelites came near to the land of Canaan, Moses sent twelve spies into the country, that they might bring back word if the people living there were strong or weak; and he also told them to bring some of the fruit of the land with them, so that they might know if it were a rich land, fit for them to make their home in.

The twelve spies spent forty days searching the land, and then they returned bringing with them grapes and pomegranates and figs. The grapes were so fine that it took two men to carry a single bunch, and the spies said that Canaan was a beautiful country, very rich in all kinds of fruit; but that the people living there were so strong that the Israelites would not be able to defeat them, and that it would be better, therefore, for them all to turn back.

Two of the spies, named Joshua and Caleb, were anxious that the Israelites should attack the Canaanites, and they said that they were sure they would be able to defeat them. But the people would not listen to them, and refused to fight the Canaanites.

God was very angry with the Children of Israel, and said that as a punishment he would cause them to wander many years longer in the wilderness.

I told you the Children of Israel had built a tabernacle in which to worship the Lord. God now wished to appoint special priests to conduct the services held in it, and so he told Moses to call together the twelve tribes, and bid the head of each tribe write his name upon a rod, and that Moses should then place the twelve rods in the tabernacle. And God said that he would cause one of the rods to blossom, and that the man whose name was written on the rod would be the man who was to serve him in his tabernacle.

Aaron had been chosen by God to represent the tribe of Levi, and when Moses went into the tabernacle the morning after the twelve rods had been placed there, he found that Aaron's rod had blossomed, and it bore fruit.

God then told Moses that Aaron and his sons were to act as priests in the tabernacle, and that all those belonging to the tribe of Levi were to assist him with the services. When Aaron died, his son Hagar was chosen to take his place.

THE PLAGUE OF SERPENTS

The Children of Israel still continued to murmur against Moses for having brought them out of the land of Egypt, and once God was so angry with them that he sent fiery serpents among them, and the serpents bit them so that numbers of the people died. Then they began to repent, and to beg Moses to ask God to forgive them and take away the plague of serpents.

God told Moses to make a serpent of brass and set it upon a pole. And when he had done this he placed it where all the people could see it, and told them that whenever a man was bitten by a serpent he had but to look at the brazen serpent and his life would be spared. And it happened just as Moses had told them. So God once more forgave his ungrateful people.

HOW BALAAM WAS REBUKED

In the course of their wanderings the Israelites came to the plains of Moab; and the King of Moab was afraid, because he thought they had come to conquer him and his people, and so he sent to a prophet called Balaam, and asked him to curse the people of Israel. But God said to Balaam: "Thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed." And he forbade Balaam to go with the messengers the King of Moab had sent. Balaam disobeyed God and went with the princes of Moab.

He was riding upon an ass, and when he came to a narrow path the ass suddenly turned aside and went into a field, for God had sent an angel to bar the way, and the poor dumb creature saw the angel and would not try to pass him, though Balaam struck her again and again. At length God gave the ass speech, and she asked Balaam why he treated her so cruelly. After the ass had spoken God allowed Balaam to see the angel, and the angel told him that had the ass not turned aside he would have killed him. The angel also told him that God wished him to go to the King of Moab, but that, instead of cursing the Children of Israel, he was to bless them, and this Balaam did.

THE DEATH OF MOSES

Moses was not allowed to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land. When he was a hundred and twenty years old God told him to appoint Joshua to take his place, and then God bade him go up to the top of Mount Pisgah. And there in that lonely place he died, and the Bible tells us that God himself buried him, so that no one ever knew where his grave was.

Now that Moses was dead, and Joshua had charge of the people, he made up his mind to try and lead them into the land of Canaan as quickly as he could.

He sent two spies into the town of Jericho to find out the best means of attacking it. These men were very nearly caught, for the king found out that there were two Israelites in the city, and searched for them. But they were lodging in the house of a woman named Rahab, and she hid them on the roof, covering them over with flax, and when night came she let them down from her window, and they escaped and went back to tell Joshua all they had found out.

On their way to Jericho the Israelites had to pass the river Jordan; but God made a passage through the river for them, so that they passed over on dry ground.

At length they came before the city of Jericho, and Joshua bade the priests take the Ark of the Covenant and march round the walls, blowing trumpets, while the people all shouted for joy, because Joshua said God had given them the city walls, and on the seventh day, as the priests blew a great blast upon the trumpets, the walls fell down, and the Israelites rushed in and destroyed both the palace and the people. Rahab and her family were the only persons saved.

God now allowed the Children of Israel to possess the whole of the land of Canaan, and he ordered Joshua to divide it among them.

THE ISRAELITES TRIUMPH OVER THEIR ENEMIES

God had brought the Israelites safely into the land of Canaan; but, instead of being thankful to him and devoting themselves to his service, they were frequently very wicked, and to punish them God allowed their enemies to oppress them for a time.

Then they prayed to God to help them, and he spoke to a prophetess named Deborah, and taught her how her people might be delivered. Deborah sent for a man named Barak, and told him that God wished him to lead the Israelites to a certain place, and that he would there deliver their enemies into his hands. But Barak was afraid and would not go unless Deborah went with him. So Deborah went, and when they came to the river Kishon she bade Barak attack the enemy, and he did so and defeated them.

The name of their captain was Sisera, and when he saw that his armies were defeated he sprang out of his chariot, and ran away on foot to hide himself. Barak, thinking that he must be in one of the chariots, pursued them, and so it seemed as though Sisera was to escape. In his flight he came to the tents of Heber the Kenite, and thought to take refuge there and rest for a while, for he had no quarrel with him.

Jael, the wife of Heber, came out to meet him, and took him into her tent, and then covered him with a cloak, so that if his enemies came to look for him while he was sleeping they would not find him. But when Sisera was asleep God spoke to Jael and told her that Sisera was his enemy, and that she had been chosen as God's means of justice. And so Jael took a tent nail and a hammer, and struck the nail into Sisera's forehead as he slept, so that he died.

GIDEON LEADS ISRAEL

In this way God delivered Israel from its enemies. But after a time the Israelites were again attacked by a nation called the Midianites, and this time a man named Gideon was chosen to deliver them.

God very often chooses quite humble people to be the instruments of his will. Gideon was only a poor man and very little thought of among the Israelites; and so when an angel came to him and said that the Lord had chosen him to vanquish the Midianites he could not at first believe it. He asked the angel to give him some sign that he was really God's messenger.

Gideon prepared some food for his visitor to eat, and when he brought it out of the house the angel bade him set it upon a rock close by. This Gideon did, and then the angel touched it with his staff, and at once a fire rose up out of the rock and burned the food. Then the angel vanished, and Gideon was afraid, because he thought God would punish him, perhaps even with death, for having doubted his messenger.

But God said: "Peace be unto thee; fear not; thou shalt not die." And Gideon made an altar to God's honor upon the rock on which the food had been burned.

When harvest-time drew near Gideon sent messages to all his countrymen to join him, saying that he would lead them against the Midianites, when they came to steal the harvest, as they had done for seven years past.

Gideon was anxious to be quite sure that he was the man chosen by God to save Israel, and so he asked for another sign. He spread a fleece of wool upon the earth and asked, if he really were God's chosen servant, that God would let the night dews fall upon the fleece only, and not on the earth.

In the morning when Gideon went out the ground was quite dry; but the fleece was so wet with dew that when he wrung it out he filled a large bowl with the water.

He was still not satisfied; perhaps he thought the fleece might have become wet by accident; so he again spread out a fleece upon the ground, and this time he asked God to let dew fall upon all the ground, but to let the fleece remain dry, as a sign that he was the right man. The next morning the ground was wet with dew, while the fleece was quite dry, so that Gideon no longer hesitated, but led the men of Israel forth to battle.

DEFEAT OF THE MIDIANITES

He determined to attack the Midianites by midnight, and he told his soldiers to take torches in their hands, but to cover them with earthen pitchers so that the Midianites could not see the lights, and he also bade them take a trumpet each and to do exactly as he, Gideon, did.

When they came to the camp of their enemies Gideon blew his trumpet and broke his earthen pitcher, and each soldier of his little army of three hundred men did the same, so that the sleeping enemy awoke to find lights blazing and trumpets blaring all round them, and became panic-stricken, so that they were very easily overcome.

There was another very brave man, named Jephthah, whom God chose at one time to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. Jephthah was so anxious to beat his foes that he made a very rash vow, not knowing how dearly this was to cost him. He vowed to God that, if he would allow him to conquer his enemies, he would offer up to him whatsoever should come first out of his house to meet him on his return.

When Jephthah returned, covered with honor and glory, for he had defeated his enemies, the first person who came out to meet him, singing and making sweet music to show her joy, was his own daughter.

God does not like us to make rash vows; perhaps it was for this reason that he punished Jephthah in this way. It was his only child, but Jephthah did not break his vow, but offered her up as a sacrifice to God.

The Bible does not tell us in what way she was sacrificed. It is thought that perhaps she was dedicated to God's service, and lived by herself in the mountains, praying, and engaged in holy works; but this no one can really tell.

SAMSON

After the death of Joshua the people of Israel were governed by men called judges. One of these judges was called Samson, and he was the strongest man that ever lived. When he was quite a young man and was on his way to a place called Timnath, a young lion sprang out upon him, and he killed it without any weapon, just as though it had been a goat or a lamb. Soon afterward he was passing by the same way, and he saw that a number of wild bees had swarmed in the body of the lion and made honey there.

SAMSON'S RIDDLE

Samson married a daughter of the Philistines —people who were constantly at war with the Israelites. At his marriage he gave a feast, to which he invited a number of the Philistines, and he asked them to answer this riddle: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Samson said they should have seven days in which to guess the answer to the riddle, and if they were successful he promised to give them a large reward. None of them could guess the answer, and so they went to Samson's wife and told her that they would burn her and her father unless she could persuade her husband to tell her the answer to the riddle and then tell it to them.

At first she could not persuade Samson; but she begged him again and again, until at last he told her, and then she went straight to the Philistines and told them. So on the seventh day when Samson asked them his riddle for the last time, the Philistines answered: "What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?" for Samson had been thinking of the lion he had killed and the bees that had made honey in its carcass. Samson was very angry, for he knew they must have made his wife tell them the answer.

SAMSON'S FEAT WITH THE FOXES

In order to be revenged upon the Philistines, who had done him a great injury, Samson once caught three hundred foxes and tied them together by their tails, and between each pair of tails he put a lighted firebrand. Then he turned the foxes loose among the cornfields and vineyards belonging to the Philistines, and as they ran about they set light to the corn and fruit, so that the harvest was quite spoiled.

When the Philistines found out who had done this they took Samson's wife when he was away, and were so cruel as to burn both her and her father. Samson killed a great many of them when he discovered this, and then he went away and lived by himself upon the top of a rock called Etam. The Philistines followed him there, and when the people who lived in those parts asked them why they had come they said they had come to take Samson, and they ordered the men of Judah, as the people were called, to go and bind Samson and bring him down to them.

SAMSON'S GREAT STRENGTH

The men of Judah were afraid to refuse, and so they went to Samson and told him what the Philistines had said, and after they had promised not to kill him themselves, but to give him over to the Philistines alive, Samson allowed them to bind him with two strong new cords, and then went down and was given over to the Philistines. The Philistines began to taunt him, but, all in a moment, he broke the cords as though they had been burnt flax, and, stooping, he picked up the jaw-bone of an ass and with it killed a thousand of the Philistines. Then he threw it away; but soon afterward, when he was so thirsty that he thought he would die, God caused water to spring from a hollow place in the bone, and he was able to quench his thirst with it.

On another occasion Samson was in a city called Gaza, and the Philistines closed the gates of the city, thinking that Samson could not escape them, and that they would be able to find him and kill him. But Samson rose up and went to the gates, and, seizing them in his arms, carried them right away.

DELILAH BETRAYS SAMSON

The Philistines now began to understand that there was some secret in the great strength Samson possessed, and that they would never be able to overcome him until they had found it out; so they went to a wicked woman, named Delilah, and offered her a great deal of money if only she could find out wherein his strength lay.

Delilah pretended to be friendly with Samson, and one day she said: "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound." Samson did not trust her quite, so he said: "If they bind me with seven green withes that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man." Delilah bound him with the green withes, but when she said, "The Philistines be upon thee," he broke his bonds quite easily.

Again she begged him to tell her the cause of his strength, and this time he told her that if he were bound with new cords he should be just as other men; but when she bound him with new cords he broke them as easily as the green withes. Next he told her that if she were to weave his hair and fasten it to the beam in the room he would not be able to resist; but when she had done this, he rose up and went away, carrying the beam with him.

Delilah asked Samson so often that at length he grew weary of her questioning and told her the truth. He said that his hair had never been cut since the day he was born, and that if any one were to shave his head he should immediately lose his great strength. Delilah told this to the Philistines, and when Samson was asleep they came and cut off his hair, and when he awoke he was no longer able to resist them; so they bound him and put out his eyes, and then set him to grind corn in prison.

SAMSON'S REVENGE AND DEATH

When he had been in prison some time his hair began to grow again, and as it grew his strength gradually came back; but the Philistines did not know this. One day they made a great feast in honor of their god Dagon, thinking it was this god that had given Samson into their hands. There were about three thousand people at the feast, and as they ate and drank and made merry they thought it would be fine sport to send for poor, blind Samson so that they could mock him.

So he was led in and made to stand between two pillars which supported the great building in which the feast was being held. Then he placed his hands upon the pillars, and while the people all mocked him Samson prayed to God to strengthen him that he might be avenged on the Philistines for all their cruelties to him and the Israelites, and he begged God to let him die also. God heard his prayer, for when Samson, grasping the pillars firmly, bowed himself with all his might, the pillars broke and the house fell, and every one in it was killed, even Samson himself. Samson had been Judge over Israel twenty years.

RUTH AND NAOMI

I told you that the land of Canaan was a very beautiful and fruitful country; but, in spite of this, there were famines there sometimes, when the people almost died for want of food.

During one of these famines a certain man named Elimelech, who lived in the town of Bethlehem, took his wife Naomi and their two sons and went to live in the land of Moab, because he heard there was plenty of food there.

Elimelech died in Moab, and when his two sons grew up they married two women of that country, named Ruth and Orpah. But very soon the two sons died also. Then Naomi had no friends left in that country, except her two daughters-in-law. Although they had been brought up to worship idols, they were both very kind-hearted and loved Naomi very dearly, and when their mother-in-law said that it was better she should return to her own country, Ruth and Orpah said that they would go with her. The famine in Canaan was over by this time, and Naomi thought that perhaps some of her relations in Bethlehem would be kind to her and provide for her in her old age.

And so Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah set out upon their journey together; but as they went Naomi reminded them of her poverty and begged them to go back to their own home and to their own gods. She talked to them so earnestly of the hard life they would have if they went with her that at length Orpah very sadly bade her good-by and went back.

But Ruth would not go, and when Naomi said to her, "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law," then Ruth answered: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried." And Ruth said that nothing but death should ever part them.

Then when Naomi saw that Ruth really loved her better than any one else in the world, she said no more; but allowed her to come with her. When they reached Bethlehem the people who had known Naomi in the days of her wealth could scarcely recognize her in the poor old woman who had come back to them.

RUTH'S GLEANING AND WHAT CAME OF IT

It was the time of the barley harvest when Naomi and her daughter-in-law came to Bethlehem, and Ruth went to glean in the fields so that she and Naomi might be able to lay by a store of food for the winter.

There was a rich man, named Boaz, a relation of Elimelech, who owned many fields, and it chanced that Ruth went to glean in one of his fields. When Boaz came into the field he noticed Ruth, and asked his reapers who the strange maiden was. The reapers answered: "It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab."

Boaz told his reapers to be kind to her and to let fall a few handfuls of grain sometimes when they were binding the sheaves, so that Ruth might find plenty of grain to carry home.

And then Boaz spoke to Ruth, and said that he had heard of all her goodness to Naomi, and bade her glean in his fields, not only while the barley harvest lasted, but all through the wheat harvest too.

From the painting by J. J. Tissot.

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TWO FAMOUS FIGURES OF OLD TESTAMENT STORY.

RUTH IN THE FIELDS.

MORDECAI IS HONORED.

Every day the reapers gave Ruth food and drink, more even than she wanted, so that she was able to carry some home to her mother-in-law.

When Ruth told Naomi the name of the man in whose fields she had gleaned she was very glad, and told Ruth that he was a relation of theirs and would no doubt be kind to them and not allow them to come to want. She bade Ruth to glean in no other fields but those of Boaz, for she was afraid he might be offended if she did so.

All through the harvest-time Boaz watched Ruth closely, and saw that she was as good and modest as she was beautiful, and so at the end of the harvest he asked her to be his wife. How happy Naomi was when she knew that her dear daughter was to be the wife of this good, kind man! She knew that she and Ruth would never be poor or lonely any more, and she knew also that Ruth had deserved the good fortune God had given her. Ruth and Boaz had a little son, named Obed, and when Obed grew up he was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David, a great king, about whom I shall tell you a little later on.

THE PROPHET SAMUEL

There was once a good woman named Hannah, who had no children, but who prayed very earnestly to God that he would send her a son. She said that if God would only listen to her prayer she would dedicate the son he sent her to his service. And God did hear her prayer and sent her a dear little baby boy, whom she called Samuel.

When Samuel was old enough, Hannah and her husband Elkanah took him to the temple and asked the high priest, whose name was Eli, to take care of him, and to bring him up to the service of God. So Samuel lived with Eli, and helped him when he ministered in the temple.

It must have been a great grief to Hannah to part with her son; but to comfort her for her loss God gave her three other sons and two daughters. Every year Hannah visited Samuel, and brought him a little coat as a present, which she herself had made for him.

Eli, the high priest, had two sons, called Hophni and Phinehas, who were very wicked, and God wished to warn Eli that he would be punished for having allowed his sons to grow up as they had, instead of forcing them to behave better. God chose little Samuel to carry this message.

It was night-time, and Eli and Samuel were asleep. Suddenly Samuel heard a voice calling him, and he ran to Eli and said, "Here am I." Eli bade him go and lie down again, for he had not called him.

Before long Samuel heard the voice again and ran to Eli, saying, "Here am I." And again Eli told him to lie down, for he had not called.

A third time God called to Samuel, and then Eli told him that if he heard the voice again he was to answer, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."

So Samuel went and lay down again, and when he heard the voice again calling: "Samuel, Samuel," he answered, "Speak; for thy servant heareth."

And God said that he was going to visit Eli and his sons with a terrible punishment, because of the wickedness of Hophni and Phinehas, and that the whole of Israel would be made to suffer with them.

In the morning, when Eli asked Samuel what God had said to him, he was afraid to tell him; but when Eli sternly bade him deliver God's message, he did so.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

Some time afterward the punishment fell. The Israelites and Philistines were at war, and the Israelites were afraid that the Ark of the Covenant might be captured, and so they ordered it to be brought to the camp, thinking it would be safe in the midst of the army. Eli's two sons came with it, but the Philistines defeated the Israelites and captured the ark. And Hophni and Phinehas were killed, and thirty thousand Israelites besides. When Eli heard the terrible news he was so shocked that he fell backward from his seat and died.

The Philistines kept the ark of God for some time, but wherever it went some misfortune happened, and so at length they sent it back to Israel, because they were afraid to keep it any longer. They returned it in a very strange way. They placed it upon a new cart, and beside it they put offerings of gold and jewels, and then they allowed the two cows which they had fastened to the cart to take whichever road they chose. And the Philistines said that if the cows drew the cart toward Israel then they would believe that the misfortunes that had befallen them had been sent by the God of Israel; but that if the cows went in another direction they would know that what had happened had only been by chance.

But the cows went straight toward Israel, and never paused until they came to a place called Beth-shemesh. The Israelites rejoiced when they saw the ark coming back, and offered up a thank-offering to God for his goodness.

SAMUEL AS JUDGE OVER ISRAEL

Samuel became judge over Israel when he grew up, and judged the people both wisely and well; but when he became old he made his two sons, Joel and Abiah, judges also, so that they might take his place when he was dead.

Samuel had taught these sons how to serve God and to deal fairly with the people; but they did not follow in their father's footsteps, for they were both dishonest and unjust, and so the people were afraid that the land would be ruled very badly after Samuel's death. For this reason they consulted together and then came to Samuel and asked him to appoint a king to rule over them.

Samuel was very much displeased with them and tried to dissuade them. When they said that other nations had kings to rule them, Samuel reminded them of the manner in which those kings treated the people; how they took the possessions of the people to give to their friends and favorites, and forced both the men and women to work for them whether they would or no.

We know that no good king would treat his people in the way Samuel said the kings of Israel would treat the Israelites; but it was very different in those days, and even at the present time Eastern monarchs treat their subjects very differently from the manner in which European kings and queens treat theirs. But still the people insisted that they would have a king, and so God told Samuel that he would show him the man he had chosen to be King of Israel.

HOW SAUL BECAME KING

There was a man of the tribe of Benjamin named Kish, and this man had lost a number of asses, so he sent his son Saul and a servant to look for them. Saul was a very handsome man and taller than any other man in Israel.

He and his servant searched for the asses three days, but they could not find them, and at length they came to the place where Samuel lived, and, knowing him to be a prophet, they went to look for him, hoping that he would be able to tell them in which direction the asses had strayed.

Now, God had told Samuel that this would happen, and that when Saul came to him he was to anoint him, for God had chosen him to be king. So Samuel told Saul to trouble no more about the asses, as they were already found. Then he sent the servant away, and when they were alone he took a vessel filled with oil and poured it upon Saul's head, thus anointing him King over Israel. After that he called all the people of Israel together and presented Saul to them, and when they saw him they all shouted together: "God save the King!" They were pleased that such a fine-looking man should have been chosen to reign over them.

When Saul first began to reign he was humble-minded, and anxious to serve God faithfully; but very soon he grew proud and haughty, and would not obey God's will; and then God sent Samuel to him to tell him that he would take the kingdom from him.

Samuel was very grieved that Saul had angered God, for he loved him and did not wish him to lose the kingdom; but God told him that he was to cease mourning for Saul, and to anoint another king in his stead.

THE ANOINTING OF DAVID

God told Samuel to go to Bethlehem, to the house of a man named Jesse, and anoint one of his sons to be the future king. Samuel went to Bethlehem, and Jesse made seven of his sons pass before him; but, although they were all fine, handsome men, God told Samuel he had not chosen any of them.

Then Samuel asked Jesse if he had no other sons, and he said that his youngest son, David, was away in the fields, tending the sheep. Samuel sent for David, and when he came the prophet saw that he was only a little rosy-cheeked shepherd boy; but God said to Samuel, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." So Samuel anointed David, and the Bible tells us that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." David did not become king at once, for after Samuel had anointed him he went back to his flocks and tended them for some time longer.

David is sometimes called the "Shepherd King," and sometimes the "Sweet Singer of Israel," because he used to sing beautiful songs to the music of his harp. Nearly all the Psalms in the Bible were composed and sung by King David.

SAUL AND DAVID

When David had been anointed by Samuel and had gone back to tend his flocks, the Spirit of God was always with him—that is to say, God put many beautiful thoughts into his mind, so that he might become fitted to be King of Israel when the right time came.

But Saul, who had offended God by his disobe-

From a painting by H. Schopin.

YOUNG DAVID SOOTHES KING SAUL BY PLAYING ON THE HARP.

dience, was very unhappy, for God's Spirit no longer whispered holy and loving words in his heart; instead of that, his mind was filled with gloomy forebodings, and at times he was so sad that he wished he could die. Then his servants told him of David, the shepherd boy who could play so sweetly upon the harp that no one who heard him could be sad any longer.

Saul sent for David, and bade him play to him, and the lovely strains of music soothed Saul's heart, so that he forgot all his bitter thoughts and was happy once more.

David was not only very good and very handsome; he was also very brave. Once when he was minding his sheep a lion came and took a lamb from the flock, and David went after it and killed it, and saved the poor frightened little lamb. Another time a bear came and took a lamb, and David killed the bear also.

HOW DAVID FOUGHT THE GIANT

Some of David's brothers were soldiers, and they were with the Israelitish army, which was drawn up in battle array to fight the Philistines. These enemies were much stronger than the Israelites, and, besides this, they had with them a giant named Goliath, who was so big and strong that the very sight of him made his enemies tremble. Every day he came out of the ranks of the Philistine army and offered to fight any one from the army of the Israelites who would come out to meet him. But there was not one of the Israelites who dared to accept the challenge.

It chanced one day that David had come to the camp to bring some food to his brothers, and when he heard Goliath's boastful speech he said that he would go out and fight him.

When Saul heard what David intended to do, he tried to dissuade him, for he was afraid that he would only lose his life without helping his country. David then told Saul how he had killed the lion and the bear who came to rob his flock, and added: "The Lord Who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me out of the hands of this giant." So Saul answered, "Go, and the Lord be with thee."

Saul would have given David armor to wear and would have had him take a sword and a spear; but the little shepherd boy had never worn armor nor fought with a sword or spear, so he said he would take only the weapons he understood. He went to a brook and chose five smooth pebbles and put them into the bag in which he generally carried his provisions; then he took his sling in his hand, and went to meet the giant.

When Goliath saw him coming he laughed scornfully, for he was angry that the Israelites should have chosen such a champion to fight against him. He said that he would tear David to pieces, and give his flesh to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field.

David answered the giant's boastful words very modestly. He said: "I come against thee in the name of the Lord of hosts. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." You see, he did not attempt to take the honor of the deed he was about to do to himself. He knew that he could not overcome the giant unless God helped him.

When David had finished speaking he took a stone from his bag and put it in his sling, and slung it at the giant, and struck him in the forehead, so that he fell down dead. Then David ran to him and, taking his great sword, he cut off the giant's head.

When the Philistines saw what had happened they turned and fled, for they knew that the God of Israel must be more powerful than their own gods, and that they could not fight against him. The Israelites pursued the Philistines for some distance and took a great deal of spoil from their tents, for the Philistines were so much afraid that they did not wait to carry anything away with them.

David took the head of Goliath, and brought it to Jerusalem; and Abner, one of the captains of the army, took David to Saul and told the King how he had saved Israel. Saul was so pleased with him that he said he would have him to live near him always, and that he must not think of returning to his father's house or of being a shepherd any more.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN

So David lived with King Saul, and in his palace he learned to know Jonathan, Saul's son. David and Jonathan grew to love each other very dearly. Jonathan loaded his friend with rich gifts, and David would willingly have died to save Jonathan's life. Their friendship lasted all their lives, in spite of the many things which happened that might have made them enemies.

David became a soldier, and fought so valiantly for his country that Saul made him head over all his army. The Philistines were always harassing the Israelites, stealing their goods and carrying away captives, and on one occasion, after Saul and David had gone to punish them for one of these raids, Saul became very jealous of David. As Saul and David were returning from battle, having defeated the Philistines and killed great numbers of them, the women came out to meet them, singing and dancing, and the words they sang were these: "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands."

THE CRUEL JEALOUSY OF SAUL

From that day Saul hated David, for he knew the people loved him better than they did their king, and he determined to kill him. Soon afterward one of his fits of melancholy came upon Saul, and he sent for David to come and soothe him with sweet music; but while David was playing Saul took his javelin—which is a kind of spear—and flung it at him, hoping to kill him. David escaped, and Saul pretended to be sorry for his anger and to be anxious to atone for it.

He told David that he would allow him to marry his daughter; but first, in order to prove that he was worthy to be the son-in-law of a king, he must distinguish himself in battle. So Saul sent him to fight the Philistines, hoping that he would be killed. But David again defeated the Philistines, and returned to marry Saul's daughter.

Jonathan was much grieved that his father should behave so cruelly and unjustly to his friend, and he spoke so earnestly to Saul about him, reminding him how good and brave David was, that Saul felt ashamed of his wicked treatment of him, and promised Jonathan that he would not try to take David's life again. But very soon his jealousy returned, and then he again tried to kill David.

One day he sent some soldiers to David's house, ordering them to watch him, and, if he tried to leave the house, to kill him. But David's wife saved his life. She let him down from the window by a rope, and then made a figure like a man and put it in bed, and pretended that it was David, and that he was ill. The soldiers went to Saul and told him that David was ill, and then Saul ordered them to kill him as he lay sick in bed; but when they went to obey his orders they found that there was no man in the bed at all, but just a senseless figure.

Sometimes Jonathan was able to save David's life, and this good friend never ceased to watch Saul and to find out his intentions, so that he might warn David if danger was at hand. Jonathan was not jealous of his friend, although he knew that at Saul's death David would be made king. He made an agreement with David that he would serve him when that time came and be second to him in the kingdom.

GENEROSITY OF DAVID TOWARD SAUL

Although Saul was always trying to kill David, on many occasions David behaved very generously to him. There were some six hundred soldiers who had followed David, when he was obliged to hide from Saul in desert places, and some of these soldiers came to him one day and told him that Saul, who had been fighting the Philistines, had lain down to rest in a cave close by, and that he was quite alone, so that David could easily kill him. David crept up to Saul and cut a piece of cloth from his cloak, and then, when Saul awoke and was going away, he called to him and showed him the cloth, telling him how easily he might have killed him had he wished to do so.

Saul was very much touched, and he called David his "son," and wept bitterly to think how cruel and revengeful he had been, while David had shown himself so generous and forgiving toward him. "Thou art more righteous than I," he said, "for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil."

But even after this Saul again pursued David, and once more David spared his life. For as Saul lay sleeping once in the midst of his army, the sentries who should have been keeping watch were sleeping too, and so David crept up to Saul and took his spear and a jar of water that stood near. Then he went away and climbed a hill a little way off, and when the soldiers awoke in the morning he called to them and showed them the spear, and rebuked them for guarding the King so carelessly.

THE DEATH OF SAUL

At length Saul died, and in a very sad manner, too. He and his sons and his army had been fighting the Philistines, and the Philistines defeated them, and killed Jonathan and two other sons of Saul and wounded the King himself. Then Saul bade his armor-bearer take a sword and kill him; but the man would not, and so Saul drew his sword and killed himself.

When the news was brought to David he did not rejoice because his enemy was dead. He only remembered the kindnesses Saul had done him when he was a humble shepherd boy, and he grieved very much that his end should have been so sad. For Jonathan he mourned more deeply, and for a long time refused to be comforted for his loss.

DAVID AND HIS REBELLIOUS SON

After Saul's death David went to a place called Hebron, in the land of Judah, and the people of Judah anointed him king. But Abner, the captain of Saul's army, proclaimed Saul's son King of Israel, and so it was not for some time that David became king over the whole of Israel. During that time Abner was continually leading his soldiers against David's soldiers; but at length, when Abner found that David's army was so much stronger than his, he advised his followers to acknowledge David as their king, reminding them how bravely he had once fought for them against the Philistines, and how necessary it was to have a king to defend them against those enemies who had been strong enough to beat Saul's army and kill him and three of his sons.

So at length David was made King of all Israel. One of the first things he did was to go to Jerusalem, which had been taken by a people called the Jebusites, and when he had conquered the Jebusites he brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, and then he laid aside his kingly robes, and acted as a priest of God, ministering to him humbly, though joyfully, clad simply in a linen garment, such as the humblest priest might have worn. God was very pleased with David, and would have blessed him all his life long if only he had continued to serve him faithfully. But when David had been king for some time he began to forget that it is a king's duty to put the welfare of his people before his own wishes.

He had power to do as he chose, and very often he used that power in a way he should not have done.

DAVID AND BATH-SHEBA

David saw a very beautiful woman named Bath-sheba, and made up his mind to marry her. When he heard that she was married already he did a very wicked and cruel thing. He sent her husband, who was called Uriah, to fight in one of his battles, and ordered him to be placed where the arrows of the enemy would be sure to reach and kill him.

As soon as David heard that he was killed he allowed Bath-sheba a short time in which to mourn for her husband and then he married her himself.

NATHAN REPROVES DAVID

No one knew of David's wickedness but One—that One was God, and he sent a prophet called Nathan to reprove David.

When Nathan came before the King he said that he had come to ask justice for a poor man, and he told this story: There was once a rich man, he said, who had everything that he could possibly desire, and flocks and herds in plenty, and there was a poor man who had only one little lamb, which he loved more dearly than anything on earth. One day the rich man had a friend to visit him, and wished to make a feast for him. He would not take a sheep or a lamb from his own flocks, but he seized the one little lamb belonging to his poor neighbor, and killed it and dressed it and set it before his friend.

David was very angry when he heard this story, and he said to Nathan: "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." Then Nathan pointed at the King and said: "Thou art the man." He reminded him how he had taken the one person Uriah had to love him from him, and how he had killed Uriah, just as surely as though his own hand had struck the blow. And in a moment David saw how wicked he had been. He would have been very glad indeed then if only he could have brought Uriah back to life again and made him happy with his dear wife to love him. But it was too late. David fasted and prayed and begged God to forgive him, and though God did forgive him at length, as he always forgives those who are really sorry for their sins, yet David could never forget his own wickedness or cease to be sorry for what he had done.

THE SORROWFUL STORY OF DAVID AND ABSALOM

David had a son named Absalom, whom he loved very dearly. The Bible tells us that "in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty."

Absalom quarreled with his brother Ammon and killed him, and then he was obliged to go away and hide himself, for he was afraid to face his father David.

It was a very long time before David forgave Absalom; but when he heard that he was very penitent he pardoned him, even kissing him tenderly, for, as I told you, David loved his son very dearly.

After this, you would have thought that Absalom would have been ashamed to behave badly to such a kind father; but he soon forgot his goodness and, instead of being grateful, he collected a number of soldiers together and went about the country persuading the people to rebel against David.

Absalom was so handsome and had such winning ways that he soon had a great many followers, and at length the rebellion spread until David was obliged to flee from Jerusalem. Followed by a few of his subjects, he went up Mount Olivet with bare feet and covered head, and weeping bitterly. It was not only that David was grieved to be driven from his beautiful city; but what caused him such bitter sorrow was the knowledge that it was his own son who had raised the rebellion and sought to make himself king in place of his father.

But God did not mean Absalom's triumph to last. David's soldiers rallied together and defeated Absalom's.

When Absalom was riding away from the field of battle the mule that carried him passed beneath the thick branches of an oak-tree, and his long, beautiful hair became entangled in the branches so that he could not get away. And there Joab, the captain of David's army, found him and killed him.

When David heard that his army had been victorious the first question he asked was, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" When he was told that his son was dead he refused to rejoice over the victory, but covered his face and wept, crying sadly: "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

The soldiers who had fought so bravely for King David were disappointed that they received no word of praise, and at length Joab went to the king and told him roughly that, unless he restrained his grief and went among the people again, he would lose the crown that had been fought for. So David put his sorrow aside and went amongst the people again, for the ruler of a country must not think too much of his private troubles and neglect his people.

David had been very anxious to build a beautiful temple in which to place the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, but God would not allow him to do this, because, he said, David had been "a man of war, and had shed blood." God told David to appoint his son Solomon to succeed him on the throne of Israel, and he promised that Solomon should build the temple which David had designed, and for which he had collected many beautiful things.

Although David had been guilty of some deeds which had offended God, he had repented of them, and became a very good and holy man. After a glorious reign of forty years, he closed his life with words of counsel to his son Solomon. "Be thou strong," he said, "and show thyself a man; . . . that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest."

SOLOMON THE WISE

Solomon succeeded his father David, as God had appointed.

Soon after he began his reign God appeared to him in a dream and asked him what good gift he should give him.

Solomon did not choose riches, or happiness, or power, or any of the gifts most people would have chosen; instead, he said to God: "Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." Solomon said that only God could really rule so great a nation as Israel justly, and so he prayed that God would help him and give him wisdom.

God was very pleased with Solomon, and not only gave him the gift he asked for, but added to it both riches and honor.

So Solomon became the wisest king that ever lived, and the people came to tell him all their grievances, and to ask him to act as judge whenever they had a dispute with any one.

THE WISE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON

One day two women came to Solomon carrying two little babies, one living and one dead. Both the women claimed the living child, and this was the story they told. They said they lived together in the same house, quite by themselves: that they went to rest one night, each with her baby beside her; but in the night one baby died. One woman said that the dead baby was not hers, although she found it lying beside her when she awoke in the morning. She declared that the other woman must have taken her baby and put the dead child in its place.

But the second woman denied this. Now, how was Solomon to decide? He knew that the real mother would sooner give up her baby than that it should have the least harm done to it, and so he gave what sounded like a very cruel order: he commanded the baby to be cut in two, and a half given to each woman. But the real mother sprang forward, begging Solomon to let the other woman take the child; she would give up all claim to it if only he would not hurt the little one. The second woman, however, agreed to have it cut in half. She did not mind what happened to it so long as it was not given to her companion. Then Solomon knew in a moment that the baby belonged to the woman who had begged him to save its life, and he gave it to her, and she carried it away joyfully. The whole nation heard of this act of justice and wisdom, and thanked God for the wise King he had chosen to reign in Israel.

In the fourth year of Solomon's reign he began to build the temple which his father David had wished to raise. It took seven years to build, and when it was finished it was the most beautiful building that had ever been made. It was all built of cedar-wood, and it was covered entirely with gold, and everything in it which was used in the service of God was made of pure gold.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S VISIT TO SOLOMON

The fame of Solomon's riches and honor and glory reached all over the earth, and people came from far and near to see the temple he had built, and to gaze upon the wise King Solomon. Among others came the Queen of Sheba. She came with a great train of camels, laden with spices, and gold, and precious stones, as gifts for Solomon. She had heard of Solomon's great wisdom, and wished to ask him many questions about the way in which she should rule her country.

When she listened to his words of wisdom, and saw the temple he had built, and the grandeur of his palace and court, she said: "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it, and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel."

When the Queen of Sheba went back to her own country Solomon told her that she might ask whatever she would of him in return for the presents she had brought him.

Toward the end of Solomon's reign he offended God by allowing some of his people to worship idols, and God told him that as a punishment he would not allow his son to be king over the whole of Israel. There was a young man named Jeroboam, a very brave soldier, and God said that this man should reign over ten of the tribes of Israel, and that only two should be governed by Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam; but he did not succeed, for Jeroboam took refuge in Egypt until Solomon died.

After Solomon's death Jeroboam came to Rehoboam and said: "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee."

This was an opportunity for Rehoboam to have won Jeroboam to his side, but he did not take it. He told Jeroboam that he would answer him and the people in three days' time. Then he took counsel with the wise old ministers who had served his father, and they advised him to deal very gently and kindly with the people, and they would then serve him faithfully.

But this counsel did not please Rehoboam, and he went to his younger friends and companions, and they gave him the worst advice they could. They reminded him that he was king, and that his subjects ought to be made to serve and obey him, and that it was beneath the dignity of a king to make promises of reform to his people. The old men begged Rehoboam not to listen to this bad counsel; but he sent them away, and would not listen to what they said.

When Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, the King spoke roughly to them and said: "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions"; meaning that, if they had thought the latter part of Solomon's reign a hard one, he would treat them much more cruelly than his father had treated them.

It was no wonder, after these harsh words, that ten of the tribes revolted and chose Jeroboam to be their king. There were only the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah left to him, and these he ruled most unwisely. He allowed his people to worship idols, and as a punishment for this God allowed the King of Egypt to overrun his country and to carry away all the rich treasures that were in the temple and in his own palace.

During the whole of his reign of seventeen years he was at war with Jeroboam.

ELIJAH

Elijah was a prophet of God. A prophet was a man whom God chose to teach the people his holy will, and to whom he spoke, sometimes in dreams and sometimes in the manner in which he spoke to Moses upon Mount Sinai.

There had been many wicked kings of Israel, but none more wicked than the King who was living at that time. His name was Ahab, and his Queen, Jezebel, was even worse than her husband. The people of Israel had forsaken and forgotten the great God who had been so good to them, and were so foolish and wicked as to worship idols of wood and stone—senseless figures made by their own hands, which could not possibly help them in times of trouble.

Elijah was sent by God to Ahab the King, to warn him that unless he and his people ceased worshiping idols he would punish them for their wickedness. But neither Ahab nor the people would listen to him. They continued to worship their idols, and even tried to kill Elijah because he was the bearer of God's message to them. So, to punish them, God did not send any dew or rain upon the earth for a long, long time, so that the crops failed for want of moisture, and the grass and the trees and flowers were all burned up. And there was very little water for either man or beast to drink, because gradually the springs and brooks dried up when there was no rain to replenish them.

THE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT ELIJAH DID

During this time of trouble God told Elijah to go out into the wilderness and hide himself by the brook Cherith, so that Ahab should not find him and kill him, for the King and the people believed that it was the prophet who had caused the drought, instead of which it was their own wickedness.

There was no food in the wilderness, and the prophet would have died of hunger if God had not taken care of him. God bade the ravens bring him bread and meat both morning and evening, and for drink there were the waters of the brook. At length the brook dried up, and then God told Elijah to go to a certain town where a poor widow lived, who would provide for him until the rain came again and the famine ceased.

When Elijah came to the gate of the city he saw the widow woman gathering sticks, and he called to her: "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." As she was going to fetch the water Elijah said: "Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand."

Then the poor woman told him sadly that she had no bread, nothing but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse, and that she was gathering the sticks so that she might make a fire and cook the oil and meal, and that when she and her son had eaten that, they would have no more, but must die of hunger. But Elijah told the widow to go and mix the meal and oil, and before she and her son ate to bring him a little cake of it, for God would not let the oil and the meal fail until he sent rain upon the earth again.

The widow did not doubt Elijah's words, but gave him food before either she or her son tasted any, and so long as the famine lasted there was always plenty of meal in the barrel and oil in the cruse.

One day a very sad thing happened. The widow's little son fell ill and died. The poor woman's heart seemed broken, but Elijah took the boy from her arms and carried him up to the little room she had given him to sleep in. Then he laid the child upon the bed and prayed God to give him back to his poor mother. "Lord my God," he cried, "hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourned, by slaying her son?" And the prophet stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried once more to God: "O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again."

God heard his prayer, for presently the child sat up, alive and well, and Elijah carried him to his mother. Oh, how happy she was to have her dear little boy safe in her arms again! She said to Elijah: "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."

ELIJAH'S CONTEST WITH THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

Soon after this, God told Elijah to go to Ahab and tell him that he would not let the terrible famine last any longer, but would send rain upon the earth. When Ahab saw Elijah he said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"

Elijah answered: "I have not troubled Israel, but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim."

And Elijah said that he would prove that his God was the true God, and that the god Baal whom King Ahab and his people worshiped had no power either for good or evil. He told Ahab to send all the people to Mount Carmel that he might speak to them there. And when they came Elijah said to them: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him."

The people did not answer, and so Elijah ordered the prophets of Baal to bring two bullocks. One they were to take, and, after having placed it upon an altar, they were to pray to their god, Baal, to send down fire from heaven to consume their offering. The prophets of Baal did this, but, although they prayed all the day, no fire was sent.

Then Elijah made an altar and dug a deep trench around it, which he filled with water. He killed the bullock and laid it upon the altar, and then he spoke to God. "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel," he said, "let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word." Then God sent down fire from heaven, which burned not only the sacrifice, but the altar of stones, and dried up the water that was in the trench.

The people were afraid now, for they knew that Elijah's God was the true God, and they fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, he is God." Now that they had acknowledged their sin, God forgave them, and told Elijah that he would send the rain that was so much needed; so Elijah told Ahab to hasten home before it began to fall. And very soon the sky was black with clouds and the rain fell in torrents.

When Ahab told his Queen, Jezebel, about the two sacrifices, and how the people had seized the false prophets of Baal and had killed them, she was very angry and said that she would kill Elijah. So God warned Elijah to go away and hide himself, and the prophet went into the wilderness, where God sent an angel to feed him.

God told Elijah to anoint a good man named Elisha to be prophet in his stead when God thought fit to take Elijah to heaven. Elijah found Elisha plowing in a field, and he cast his mantle upon him. Elisha knew at once that he had been chosen as a minister of God, for he asked leave to go and bid farewell to his father and mother and friends, and when he had done this he followed Elijah and became his servant.

HOW AHAB TOOK NABOTH'S VINEYARD

Ahab had acknowledged Elijah's God to be the true God, but his wife, Jezebel, soon persuaded him to worship idols again, and then he became more wicked than ever. There was a man named Naboth, who owned a vineyard close by the walls of Ahab's palace, and Ahab set his heart upon possessing this vineyard and turning it into a garden.

The King went to Naboth and offered to buy it or else to give him another vineyard in exchange for it. But the man did not wish to part with it, because it had belonged to his family for a very long time, and so he refused to let Ahab have it. Ahab was so angry and disappointed that he went home and lay down upon his bed and refused to eat or speak. But his wicked Queen, Jezebel, went to him and told him to arise, and eat and drink and be merry, for he should have the vineyard.

Then she caused Naboth to be seized and brought to a mock trial, and she bribed two witnesses to say that he had spoken ill of both God and the King; so he was condemned to die, and was carried away outside the city and stoned to death. Then she told Ahab to go and take possession of the vineyard, and he did so.

As he was walking in it he looked up and saw Elijah coming toward him. The wicked King trembled and said, "Hast thou found me, O my enemy?" And Elijah said, "I have found thee; because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee."

Three years afterward Ahab was killed in battle, and Jezebel met with a terrible death: her servants threw her from her window, and she was crushed upon the stones beneath.

The time had now come for Elijah's work on earth to cease. He took Elisha with him to a place called Gilgal, and when they came to the river Jordan and wished to pass over, Elijah took his mantle and struck the waters with it and they parted at once, leaving a dry pathway by which Elijah and his servant could pass over.

Elijah now told Elisha that he was to be taken from him, and while they were talking together a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and parted them. And Elijah was caught up into the chariot and was carried away by a great wind into heaven.

But as he went his mantle fell from him, and Elisha took it up, and with the mantle he received the strange power of performing miracles which God had given to Elijah, for when shortly afterward he wished to recross the river Jordan, he struck the waters with the mantle as Elijah had done, and they at once parted to allow him to pass over to the other side.

ELISHA, THE MAN OF GOD

I have told you that when Elijah's mantle fell to earth and was caught up by his servant Elisha, whom he had been teaching to become a minister of God, Elisha was at once able to perform miracles. This power remained with him all his life.

Once when the King of Syria had made a plan to capture the King of Israel, God spoke to Elisha and told him of the plan, and he was able to warn his King and to save him from being made prisoner.

The King of Syria was very angry when he heard the King of Israel had been saved, and he sent an army to try and take the man of God; but God sent angels to protect his prophet, and when the Syrians came near Elisha's house they were suddenly smitten with blindness, so that they could not find their way, and Elisha led them captive into Samaria.

When they came into the presence of the King of Israel, Elisha prayed that they might have their sight restored to them, and God granted his prayer. How surprised they must have been when God gave them back their sight and they suddenly found themselves in the camp of the enemy!

The King of Israel would have killed them, but Elisha would not allow him to do so. He told the King to give them food and send them back to their master.

This story shows you how by God's help the whole Syrian army was defeated by one man.

HOW ELISHA HELPED MANY

Elisha not only busied himself in great matters: he was always ready to help the poor and needy when they were in distress. One day a poor woman came to him, weeping bitterly, for her sons were about to be taken from her and sold as slaves.

She said that her husband was dead, and she was so poor that she could not pay her debts, and so the people to whom she owed money were coming to take her children from her to sell them, in order that they might repay themselves the money she owed them. Elisha asked her if she had nothing in the house with which she could pay her debt. She said she had nothing at all but one pot of oil.

Then Elisha told her to go to her neighbors and borrow as many empty bottles and pots as she possibly could, and when she had done this he told her to pour oil from her own pot into the empty ones. She did so, and as she poured the oil went on increasing, so that at length it filled all the empty vessels she had borrowed.

Then Elisha told her to go and sell the oil, and she received so much money for it that she was able, not only to pay her debts and so save her sons, but to have sufficient money left over to buy food for herself and her children.

It happened one day that Elisha was passing through a place called Shunem, and a rich woman who lived there came out to him and begged him to come into her house and take food and rest. Elisha did so, and after that the woman never failed to look for him and invite him in, and even persuaded her husband to build a little room for him, so that whenever he was in Shunem he might feel that he had a quiet resting-place where he could pray to God undisturbed.

Elisha was very grateful to the woman, and he asked God to give her that which she most desired. She had no child, and so God sent her a little son.

When the baby had grown to boyhood he went out into the harvest-field with the reapers to enjoy himself in the sunshine, but he suddenly fell sick and told his father that his head pained him. The father bade a servant carry the child to his mother; so he carried him into the house and put him on his mother's lap, but the poor little boy only grew worse and worse, until at noon he died.

The mother carried him to the little room that she and her husband always kept ready for Elisha, and then she set out to find the man of God, hoping that he would help her in her distress. And he did. He sent his servant Gehazi to lay his staff upon the child, but when he did not recover Elisha went up to the room where he lay and prayed God to restore the woman's son to life. He breathed upon his mouth, and put his eyes against the child's eyes, and his hands upon his, and presently he sat up and sneezed seven times; then he opened his eyes, and Elisha told his servant to call his mother, who came and took her son away alive and well.

ELISHA HEALS NAAMAN'S LEPROSY

Once Elisha was so good and kind as to help one of his enemies. There was a captain of the King of Syria's army called Naaman, and Naaman was suffering from the terrible complaint of leprosy. In Naaman's house there was a little captive maid whom the Syrians had brought away from Israel, and whom Naaman had given to his wife.

I think Naaman's wife must have been kind to the little captive, for she seems to have loved her mistress, and when she saw how grieved she was over her husband's illness she told her of the prophet of Israel who would surely be able to cure him.

Naaman told the King of Syria, and he was anxious that his brave captain should be cured; so he wrote a letter to the King of Israel, begging him to help Naaman, and sent the letter by Naaman himself. When the King read the letter he was very much afraid, for he thought the King of Syria had just sought an excuse for another quarrel. "Am I God," he said, "to kill and to make alive: that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?"

But when Elisha heard what had happened he told the King to send Naaman to him. When he came to his house Elisha did not go out to meet him, as Naaman expected he would. Instead, he sent a message by his servant, telling him to go and wash seven times in the river Jordan.

Naaman was very much offended: he thought Elisha was mocking him, and would have gone away without doing as the prophet bade him; but his servant reminded him that if Elisha had ordered him to do some great or difficult thing he would have done it, and so at last, very reluctantly, he allowed himself to be persuaded. He went and dipped seven times in the river Jordan, and at once his flesh became smooth and healthy like the flesh of a little child.

FALSEHOOD AND AVARICE PUNISHED

NAAMAN was anxious to reward the prophet who had cured him, but Elisha would take nothing. And now a very terrible thing happened. Elisha's servant, Gehazi, thought how foolish it was of his master to refuse a reward from a Syrian, an enemy of their own country; and so he went after Naaman and said his master had changed his mind and would accept some of his gifts.

Naaman gave him most willingly all he asked for, and pressed more upon him, and then Gehazi went back to his master, thinking he would never find out what he had done. But God had seen Gehazi, and had told Elisha to punish him, and so when he returned Elisha bade the leprosy which had left Naaman to come upon Gehazi, and he went out from Elisha's presence "a leper as white as snow."

Even in small matters Elisha was always ready to help those who asked him. A man was one day felling wood beside the river Jordan, and he let the head of the axe he was using fall into the stream. He was greatly distressed, for the axe was a borrowed one; but when he told Elisha, that good man made the iron axe swim, so that the workman had only to put out his hand and take it.

During Elisha's lifetime there were several different kings in Israel. Many of them worshiped idols, and there was a beautiful house in which images of the god called Baal were set up for the people to pray to; but God put it into the heart of this high priest to persuade the Israelites to return to the worship of their own Lord God. So they destroyed the house of Baal, and broke the images in pieces. But alas! after a time they again sinned against God, and in his anger he punished them by allowing the Syrians to defeat them in battle.

When Elisha was an old man and very, very ill—so ill, indeed, that he died soon afterward—the King of Israel came to him, weeping bitterly over the destruction of his people. Elisha told him to take his bow and arrows and stand by the open window and shoot. And the King shot an arrow from the bow, and Elisha said it was "the arrow of the Lord's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria."

Then, having promised that Israel should be delivered from the army of the Syrians, Elisha closed his eyes and died.

ESTHER

THERE was once a very rich and powerful King named Ahasuerus, who reigned over a hundred and twenty provinces, reaching from Nubia to Ethiopia.

In the third year of his reign this King made a great feast, or rather festival, for it lasted many months, and to this festival all his nobles and companions were invited.

The name of the Queen of that land was Vashti, and she also gave a feast to the ladies of her court, for it was not the custom at that time for men and women to be present at feasts together.

During the feast Ahasuerus boasted of the beauty of his Queen, and even ordered her to be brought in among them, so that all the guests might see that he spoke the truth.

When the Queen received the King's message she was very angry indeed, and refused to go. She was a very proud woman, and she thought the King had put a great slight upon her by ordering her to come into the presence of his guests just to show off her beauty. In Eastern countries women were looked upon as little better than slaves, and therefore when the King was told that Vashti refused to obey his orders, he declared that she should no longer be the queen. He sent her away from his palace and chose another very beautiful maiden to be queen in her place.

The new Queen was named Esther: she was a Jewess, though the King did not know this, and she had no parents, but had been brought up by her uncle, Mordecai.

THE STORY OF HAMAN AND MORDECAI

Now, the King's chief minister was called Haman, and this Haman hated Mordecai, because he refused to offer homage to him when he passed in and out of the King's palace. Haman knew Mordecai was a Jew, but he did not know that he was the Queen's uncle, and so, in order to be revenged upon him, he persuaded the King to order all his Jewish subjects, men and women and children, to be put to death.

When Mordecai heard what was about to happen he sent a message to Esther, telling her to intercede with the King for her country-people. Esther was much distressed, for there was a law which forbade any one to enter the King's presence unbidden, and she said that if she ventured to do so she might be condemned to die, unless the King should hold out his golden scepter to her as a sign of forgiveness and protection. But when the King saw her he held out his golden scepter and asked her kindly: "What wilt thou, Esther? and what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of my kingdom."

Esther then asked the King to come to a banquet which she was preparing for him, and to allow Haman to come also. Ahasuerus promised that he would do this.

That night the King could not sleep, and so he bade his servant bring him the book of records in which all great deeds were written down. In this book he saw Mordecai's name, for Mordecai had once saved the King's life. Ahasuerus asked what reward he had received, and when he heard he had never been rewarded he sent for Haman and asked him what should be done to the man whom the King wished to honor.

Haman believed that he himself was the man, and so he said that he should be arrayed in the King's own royal robes, and treated with great respect, and then it should be proclaimed in the streets that he was "the man whom the King delighteth to honor." Haman was much surprised when the King told him to do such honor to Mordecai. He dared not refuse; but when he had obeyed he went home full of grief.

But the King's servants came to fetch him to the banquet which Esther had prepared, and during the banquet the King asked his Queen to make a petition, and no matter what she asked he would grant it. Then she told him of Haman's wicked plot, and begged him to save her life and the lives of her people.

The King was very angry when he heard of Haman's treachery, and when one of his chamberlains pointed out a tall gallows upon which Haman had intended to hang Mordecai, King Ahasuerus ordered Haman to be hanged there instead.

He now wished to prevent the carrying out of his orders that all the Jews were to be killed, but by the Persian law an order once given could not be recalled; so he sent messages to the Jews, warning them that they would be attacked, and they were therefore able to defend themselves, and, instead of all being killed, they killed a great number of their enemies.

Mordecai was raised to a position of great honor, for next to the King he became the highest in the land.

DANIEL

The people of Israel had again offended God, and so he allowed Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, to come and besiege Jerusalem and carry many of the Jews away. Among those who were taken captive were four very good and wise men, named Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

One night Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream; but in the morning he could not remember it, and he was so unreasonable as to send for a number of his wise men to tell him what he had dreamt about and the meaning of the dream. They could not do this, and so, in a fit of anger, he ordered all the wise men in his kingdom to be put to death. When the soldiers came to kill Daniel he told them that if the King would give him time he would ask God to tell him what the dream had been, as his God was able to do all things.

Nebuchadnezzar granted him the time he asked for, and God showed Daniel both the dream and the interpretation of it. So Daniel went to the King and told him his dream. It was this: There was a great figure made of all kinds of metals, and also partly of clay. This figure was struck by a stone and broken to pieces, and the wind came and scattered the pieces all over the earth.

The meaning of the dream, Daniel said, was this: The limbs of the figure, all made of different metals, represented the kingdoms of the earth, which God would one day destroy utterly, and in place of them he would set up his own kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar was so pleased with Daniel that he placed him and his three companions in positions of great trust, and said that their God must be the true God.

DANIEL'S FRIENDS CAST INTO THE FIERY FURNACE

But Nebuchadnezzar soon forgot what he had said, and made a great image of gold and set it up in a large plain near his palace. And he commanded that all his subjects should come into the plain where this image was, and that they should fall down and worship it. The people were afraid to disobey the King's command, for he had ordered any one who did so to be thrown into a fiery furnace and burned.

We are not told what answer Daniel made to the King. Perhaps he was not present, for we know that such a good man would have refused to worship an idol. His three companions went to the plain with the rest of the people; but they would not bow down to the golden idol, and Nebuchadnezzar sent for them in great anger and

From the painting by Briton Rivière.

DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS.

"My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."—*Dan.* vi. 22.

asked them how they dared disobey his commands.

They answered that the God they served was able to deliver them out of his hand; but the King said he would not save them from the fiery furnace.

He then ordered them to be bound hand and foot and cast into the hottest part of the fire. This was done, and the heat from the furnace was so great that it killed the men who had to cast them in. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were not harmed. The Son of God, in whom they had trusted, came to them and would not let the fire touch them. When the King saw four figures in the midst of the flames, moving about unbound and unharmed, he knew that what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego had said was true, and that their God had been able to protect them.

So Nebuchadnezzar went near to the mouth of the furnace and cried: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the Most High God, come forth and come hither." And when they came out it was found that even their clothing had not been so much as singed.

Nebuchadnezzar now commanded that all idols should be broken and thrown aside, and that the whole nation should worship the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

Many years passed and King Nebuchadnezzar died, and his son Belshazzar reigned in his stead. He was a very wicked man, and ruled his kingdom so badly that God determined to take it from him.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

One day the King gave a great feast, but in the midst of the feasting and laughter a sudden hush of fear fell upon all those who were present, for the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote upon the wall. The King saw both the hand and the writing; but the words were in a language he could not understand, so he sent for his wise men, and even they could not read them.

Then the Queen reminded Belshazzar that in the days of his father Nebuchadnezzar there had been a wise man named Daniel who had understood the meaning of many things which the King's soothsayers and astrologers had not been able to interpret for him.

So the King sent for Daniel, and when he saw the words he told the King that the meaning was this: "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." These were terrible words for Belshazzar. God did not mean him to be king any longer, for he had been found wanting, as he had not made use of the opportunities given him to benefit his kingdom, and God would allow the Medes and Persians to conquer it.

All this really happened, for Belshazzar was killed the very same night, and Darius, a Median, became king in his stead. Darius soon found out what a good and wise man Daniel was, and he placed him in a high position, making him ruler over the whole kingdom, so that the princes and officers had to give an account to him of the manner in which they governed their provinces.

DANIEL CAST INTO THE LIONS' DEN

This made the princes and nobles very angry, and they hated Daniel, and determined, if possible, to rid themselves of him. They knew it would be useless to speak ill of him to the King; and so they made a very wicked plot.

First they flattered the King's vanity by saying how good and great and just he was, and then they begged him to sign a decree that for thirty days all the people were to come to him if they had any favor to ask, and that any person who, during that time, made a petition to either God or man should be cast into a den of lions.

Daniel was told of this decree, and yet he continued to pray to God, and so the wicked men who had made the plot hurried to tell the King that Daniel had asked a petition of God, and ought therefore to be thrown into the lions' den.

Darius was very much grieved and saw how wrong and foolish he had been in signing such a decree; but, as I told you before, a law once made was never broken by the Medes and Persians, and so Daniel was cast into the den.

The king passed the whole night fasting and mourning. He could not sleep, and very early in the morning he went to the lions' den and called to Daniel, asking him if his God had been able to save him from the lions. Oh, how thankful he was when Daniel answered him and said: "O King, live forever! My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me."

Then the King commanded that Daniel should be taken out of the lions' den, and he made a decree that all his subjects should worship Daniel's God, for he was the only God able to deliver his servants in the time of trouble.

Daniel lived until the time of captivity in Babylon was ended, and he and his countrymen went back to Jerusalem and rebuilt the city and the temple, which had been burned by Nebuchadnezzar.

JONAH

There was once a prophet of Israel called Jonah, whom God commanded to go to Nineveh, a city in Assyria, and there preach to the people and tell them that God would punish them for their great wickedness.

Jonah did not wish to go, and so he tried to flee from the presence of God. How foolish it was of him to suppose that God could not punish him if he hid himself!

Jonah went to a place called Joppa and there took ship for Tarshish. But before long God sent a great wind which lashed the sea into a mighty storm, and the sailors were afraid that the ship would sink.

Then the captain and all his men prayed to their gods to save them, and they began throwing the merchandise overboard to lighten the ship.

While the storm raged overhead Jonah lay fast asleep and heard nothing of it, and so the captain went to him and shook him until he awoke, and said: "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."

When the storm did not cease the sailors began to whisper among themselves that there must be some wicked person on board, to punish whom the storm had been sent. They cast lots to see who this wicked person might be, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

Then the sailors asked him: "What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?"

Jonah told them that he was a Hebrew, and that he was fleeing from the presence of God, and that God had sent the storm to punish him for his disobedience.

JONAH THROWN OVERBOARD

The sailors asked what they should do with him so that the storm might cease, and Jonah bade them take him up and cast him into the sea.

They were kind-hearted men and did not like to harm him, and so they rowed as hard as they could to try and bring the ship safely to land; but the sea was too wild for them, and soon they saw that the ship would be lost unless the storm ceased. And so they cast Jonah into the waves, and at once the storm ceased raging and the sea was still.

God did not mean Jonah to die, and so he sent a great fish, which swallowed him without harming him, and for three days and nights he lay in the fish repenting his disobedience and praying God to save him. At the end of that time God caused the fish to cast him out on dry land, uninjured.

Jonah did not hesitate when God told him a second time to go to Nineveh and preach to the people. He went at once and told them that in forty days God would destroy Nineveh, because of their wickedness. Jonah preached so earnestly to them that they began to repent, and prayed so humbly and heartily to God that he said he would forgive them and spare the city.

Instead of being pleased, Jonah was very angry, for he said that now people would say he was a false prophet. He did not think of the poor creatures who would be destroyed if Nineveh fell; he thought only of himself and what people would say of him. He turned away and left the city, saying that he wished he were dead. At length he became so weary and faint that he might have died had not God caused a tree to spring up which sheltered him from the fierce rays of the sun. But the next day God caused the tree to wither and he sent a bitter east wind, so that Jonah suffered both from sun and wind.

Again Jonah complained bitterly and wished that he might die; but God rebuked him, and reminded him that, though he grieved over the destruction of a mere plant, which had sprung up quickly without his aid, yet he was willing that a whole city with thousands of inhabitants should perish. He was a very selfish man: he wished the tree to live because it sheltered him, and he wished the people of Nineveh to perish so that he, who had predicted its fall, should not be called a false prophet. He thought only of himself, and people who think only of themselves are never happy.

BIBLE CURIOSITIES AND MEMORY-TESTS

BABY'S BIBLE PICTURES

An A B C Book

A is for Adam, the first man God made,
Who dwelt in the Garden of Eden's fair shade.

B is for Bethlehem; Jesus was born
In Bethlehem town the first Christmas morn.

C for the Children who stood at Christ's knee,
As he tenderly bade them "Come unto me."

D for the Dove bringing tidings of peace,
By which Noah knew the waters would cease.

E for Elijah, whom ravens once fed,
Bringing him daily from heaven his bread.

F for the Flight of the holy Christ-child
With Joseph, and Mary, his mother so mild.

G for the Goodness, and Gentleness too,
The Samaritan showed the poor wounded Jew.

H is for Hannah: the son she loved well
She brought to the Temple with Eli to dwell.

I is for Isaac, who, God said, should die;
Meaning that Abraham's faith he would try.

J is for Jesus, so tender and true,
Who promised to love little children like you.

K for the Kingdom of heaven on high,
Where Jesus now dwells far beyond the blue sky.

L for the Laws that were graven so plain;

M is for Moses who broke them in twain;
Fierce in his wrath, for the people he led
No longer served God, but an idol instead.

N is for Nazareth, where, calm and content,
The beautiful years of Christ's childhood were spent.

O for Obedience which children should show
To their Father on high and their parents below.

P for the Prophets stands, by whom of old
God's will to his people was ever foretold.

Q for the Quails, which the Israelites found,
When, hungry, they searched for some food all around.

R is for Ruth, who one fair harvest morn
Gleaned 'mong the sheaves of the bright golden corn.

S is for Samuel, who, though very small,
Was yet not afraid to answer God's call.

T for the Temple, in which Jesus taught
And turned out the merchants who there sold and bought.

U for Uriah, so trusty and tried,
Who fought for his country and valiantly died.

V for the Vision, the heavenly gleam,
Jacob once saw in his beautiful dream.

W for the Widow who gave God her mite;
The offering, though small, was great in his sight.

X is for Xmas, that happy day when
Jesus brought peace and good will unto men.

Y for the Years since our dear Saviour's birth,
Bringing rich blessings to men upon earth.

Z for the Zeal we should all of us show
Praising our God in his kingdom below.

SCRIPTURE ALPHABET GAME

THE slenderest rhyming facility only is needed to play the game of Scripture Alphabet.

One person writes a line beginning with "A," which must be the initial of somebody or something mentioned with some prominence in the Bible. The second player must write the next line in the same meter, beginning with "B"; the third "C," and so on, until the end of the alphabet is reached—passing the paper from one to another. Any one who confesses inability may refuse, and the next player writes the line, until finally one person may be left alone as victor. If two or more contestants still dispute the victory when "Z" is reached, they may begin again with "A."

Scripture Alphabet

A was a traitor found hung by his hair.
B was a folly built high in the air.
C was a mountain o'erlooking the sea.
D was a nurse buried under a tree.
E was a firstborn, bad from his youth.
F was a ruler, who trembled at truth.
G was a messenger, sent with good word.
H was a mother, who lent to the Lord.
I was a name received at the ford.
J was a shepherd in Arabian land.
K was a place near the desert of sand.
L was a pauper begging his bread.
M was an idol, an object of dread.
N was an architect, ages ago.
O was a rampart to keep out the foe.
P was an isle, whence a saint looked above.
Q was a Christian, saluted in love.
R was obscure, yet a mother of kings.
S was a Danite, who did wondrous things.
T was a city that had a strong hold.
U was a country productive of gold.
V was a queen whom a king set aside.
Z was a place where a man wished to hide.

Answers to Scripture Alphabet

A-bsalom	II. Sam. xviii. 9.
B-abel	Gen. xi. 9.
C-armel	I. Kings xviii. 42, 43.
D-eborah	Gen. xxxv. 8.
E-sau	Heb. xii. 16.
F-elix	Acts xxiv. 25.
G-abriel	Dan. ix. 21.
H-annah	I. Sam. i. 27, 28.
I-srael	Gen. xxxii. 22, 28.
J-ethro	Ex. iii. 1.
K-adesh-barnea	Deut. i. 19.
L-azarus	Luke xvi. 20, 21.
M-olech	Lev. xx. 2, 3.
N-oah	Gen. vi. 13, 22.
O-phel	II. Chron. xxvii. 3.
P-atmos	Rev. i. 9.
Q-uartus	Rom. xvi. 23.
R-achab	Matt. i. 5.
S-amson	Judg. xiv. 5, 6.
T-yre	II. Sam. xxiv. 7.
U-phaz	Jer. x. 9.
V-ashti	Esther i. 9, 19.
Z-oar	Gen. xix. 22.

BIBLE CHARACTERS

I

A character is chosen by the company in the absence of one player, who, upon his return, is told, for example, that the person selected is "a woman of the Old Testament, whose eagerness to secure a blessing for her son brought sorrow instead of joy."

Each person is then questioned in turn, and each has chosen a new character, the initial letters of which in succession will spell the word originally decided upon.

No. 1 answers, "I am one whose rejection of faithful counselors led to a national rebellion."

No. 2. "To me was the charge of the tabernacle committed during the wilderness journey."

No. 3. "I was so wrong-headed that even my dumb beast tried to lead me aright."

No. 4. "I am a prophet who was a witness for God before multitudes, and yet fled for my life at the threat of a woman."

No. 5. "I am the father of a man who made a failure of his life, though in appearance 'every inch a king.'"

No. 6. "I represent the place of Israel's first defeat after entering Canaan."

No. 7. "I had a fine navy, which brought great riches to Jerusalem."

Answers

Rebekah:

1. Rehoboam.
2. Eleazar.
3. Balaam.
4. Elijah.
5. Kish, father of Saul.
6. Ai.
7. Hiram of Tyre.

II

To be written and the answers appended:

1. Who like the lion seeketh to devour,
   The godly man in an unguarded hour?
2. Whose occupation did the apostle share
   When forced to labor for his daily fare?
3. In what did Ruth her present take away,
   Which to her mother she did straight convey?
4. To what great sin was Israel's nation prone,
   Which robbed their God of what was his
      alone?
5. Who was by faith enabled to despise
   The lion's yawning jaws and glaring eyes?

Take now the five initials, and you'll find
The name of one most favored of mankind.
He, choosing in his youth the better part,
Was called by God one after his own heart.

Answers

1. Devil.
2. Aquila.

3. Veil.
4. Idolatry.
5. Daniel.

The initial letters of which spell David.

CAPPING QUOTATIONS

One person gives a quotation from the Bible, which must be promptly followed by another from the next player *beginning with* the letter that concluded the former quotation. For example:

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do righ*t*?"

"The way of transgressors is har*d*."

"Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee thy heart's desir*e*."

"Endure all thing*s*."

"Search the Scripture*s*."

"Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of thes*e*."

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from abov*e*."

"Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wis*e*."

"Evil communications corrupt good manner*s*."

"Seek, and ye shall fin*d*."

"Do good and lend, hoping for nothing agai*n*."

"Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Fathe*r*."

"Rejoice in the Lord always," etc.

THE "FIRST THINGS" OF THE BIBLE

1 1. What was the first command of God?

2. On what occasion did man first exercise his power of speech?

3. Who was the first human transgressor?

2 4. What was the first recorded prophecy?

5. Who was the first exile in Bible times?

6. Who told the first recorded lie?

7. Where do we find the oldest Hebrew poetry?

8. Who was the first person that died a natural death?

5 9. Who offered the first recorded prayer?

10. What was the first mentioned meat for food?

11. By whom was the first land purchased?

12. What is the first recorded use of current money?

13. How was the first recorded oath administered?

14. Of what did the first wedding present consist?

15. Where is the first mention of giving a tenth to God?

16. Who erected the first monument to the dead?

17. With what operation are physicians first mentioned?

18. Who was the first Jewish high priest?

3 19. Who was the first sacred historian?

20. Which of the tribes marched first in the wilderness journey?

21. Who was the first to commit suicide, and how?

22. Where is the first mention of a library?

4 23. What was the text of our Saviour's first sermon?

24. Who was the first recorded Gentile convert?

Answers to the "First Things" of the Bible

1. "Let there be light."—Gen. i. 3.

2. On giving names to the animal creation.—Gen. ii. 19.

3. The woman Eve.—I. Tim. ii. 14; Gen. iii. 1.

4. The coming of Christ.—Gen. iii. 15.

5. Adam.—Gen. iii. 24.

6. Cain.—Gen. iv. 9.

7. Lamech's address to his wives is probably the oldest Hebrew poetry to be found.—Gen. iv. 23, 24.

8. Adam.—Gen. v. 5.

9. Abraham.—Gen. xviii. 16–33.

10. Veal.—Gen. xviii. 7, 8.

11. Abraham.—Gen. xxiii. 3, 4, 16, 18.

12. By Abraham in the purchase of land.—Gen. xxiii. 16.

13. By putting the hand of the person sworn under the thigh of the person administering.—Gen. xxiv. 2, 3.

14. Earrings, bracelets, jewels, etc.—Gen. xxiv. 22, 30, 53.

15. Jacob at Bethel.—Gen. xxviii. 22.

16. Jacob, at the grave of Rachel.—Gen. xxxv. 20.

17. The embalming of Jacob's body.—Gen. l. 2.

18. Aaron.—Ex. xxviii. 1.

3 19. Moses.—Num. i. 17, 18.

20. The tribe of Judah.—Num. x. 14.

21. Saul, by falling on his sword.—I. Sam. xxxi. 4.

22. The house of the rolls, or books, the king's library.—Ezra vi. 1.

4 23. Repent.—Matt. iv. 17.

24. Cornelius.—Acts x. 3.

OLD TESTAMENT QUERIES

1. Who built Nineveh?

2. Who suggested selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites?

3. What was the name of Joseph's wife in Egypt?

4. From whom did Moses receive his name?

5. Who built a monument in the middle of a river, and why?

6. What criminal in his confession said, "I saw, I coveted, I took"?

7. Who said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"?

8. Who said, "Ye are witnesses against yourselves"?

9. Who told his life's secret to a woman with disastrous results?

10. What is the most noted instance of devoted friendship?

11. Six women once took a journey which resulted in a wedding. Who were the bride and groom?

12. From what king did David take both crown and capital?

13. Whose head was cut off and thrown over a wall at the suggestion of a woman?

14. Who does the Bible say had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot?

15. Who preferred in the time of trouble to fall into God's hands, rather than into the hands of man?

16. Whose daughter was Solomon's first wife?

17. Who built Tadmor (Palmyra) in the desert?

18. What two Old Testament persons fasted forty days?

19. What queen sent a message with a forged signature?

20. Who destroyed the brazen serpent Moses made?

21. What laboring men were so honest that no accounts were kept?

22. By whom was Solomon's temple destroyed?

23. To which son of Jacob was the birthright given when taken from Reuben?

24. Whose faces were like the faces of lions?

25. What tribe furnished the counselors of Israel?

26. What tribe of Israel was specially characterized by sincerity?

27. Who were the doorkeepers of the ark?

28. To whom was applied the military title of general?

29. What king had eighty-eight children?

30. Who was in command of one million of soldiers?

31. What queen in Bible times is described as that "wicked woman"?

32. Who, of the kings of Israel, was carried captive to Babylon, and brought back to Jerusalem?

33. What king of Judah had not seen a copy of the law till he was twenty-six years old?

34. What women helped to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem?

35. Who said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away"?

36. Who said, "All that a man hath will he give for his life"?

37. Who expressed a desire to be where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest?

38. Who said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him"?

39. Who says "in his heart, There is no God"?

40. Who acknowledges that the lines are fallen unto him in pleasant places?

41. Who said, "All men are liars"?

42. Who said, "He who ruleth his spirit is better than he who taketh a city"?

43. Who said, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly"?

44. Who does the Bible say "cannot prosper"?

45. Who prayed, "Give me neither poverty nor riches"?

46. Who said, "There is no discharge in that war"?

47. To whom was it revealed several hundred years before that the Redeemer should be born of a virgin?

48. Who said, "The host of heaven shall be dissolved"?

49. Who lamented "the harvest is past, and the summer is ended"?

50. Who asked, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin"?

51. What other nation besides Israel is to be scattered to all people?

52. Who was Belshazzar's successor as king of the Chaldeans?

53. Who said, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone"?

54. What prophet was a herdsman?

55. What prophet was sent as a missionary to the Gentiles?

56. What prophet said, "In wrath, remember mercy"?

57. What prophet said, "They save wages to put into a bag with holes"?

58. Who said, "At evening time it shall be light"?

59. Who asked the question, "Will a man rob God?"

60. What became of the golden calf set up by Aaron in the wilderness journey?

61. For how long did marriage exempt a man from going to war?

Answers to Old Testament Queries

1. Asshur.—Gen. x. 11.
2. Judah.—Gen. xxxvii. 26, 27.
3. Asenath.—Gen. xli. 45.
4. Pharaoh's daughter.—Ex. ii. 10.
5. Joshua, in Jordan, as a memorial of God's deliverance.—Josh. iv. 9.
6. Achan.—Josh. vii. 21.
7. Joshua.—Josh. xxiv. 15.
8. Joshua.—Josh. xxiv. 22.
9. Samson.—Judg. xvi. 17.
10. That of Jonathan and David.—I. Sam. xviii. 1.
11. Abigail and David.—I. Sam. xxv. 42.
12. From the king of the Ammonites.—II. Sam. xii. 29, 30.
13. The head of Sheba.—II. Sam. xx. 21.
14. Goliath.—II. Sam. xxi. 20.
15. David.—II. Sam. xxiv. 14.
16. The daughter of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. —I. Kings iii. 1.
17. Solomon.—I. Kings ix. 17, 18.
18. Moses and Elijah.—Ex. xxiv. 18; I. Kings xix. 8, 9.
19. Jezebel used Ahab's name.—I. Kings xxi. 8.
20. Hezekiah.—II. Kings xviii. 4.
21. Workmen on the temple.—II. Kings xxii. 7.
22. Nebuchadnezzar.—II. Kings xxv. 1–11.
23. To Joseph.—I. Chron. v. 1.
24. The Gadites.—I. Chron. xii. 8.
25. Issachar.—I. Chron. xii. 32.
26. Zebulon.—I. Chron. xii. 33.
27. Obed-Edom and Jehiah.—I. Chron. xv. 24.
28. Joab, of David's army.—I. Chron. xxvii. 34.
29. Rehoboam.—II. Chron. xi. 21.
30. Zerah.—II. Chron. xiv. 9.
31. Athaliah.—II. Chron. xxiv. 7.
32. Manasseh.—II. Chron. xxxiii. 11, 13.
33. Josiah.—II. Chron. xxxiv. 1, 18.
34. The daughters of Shallum.—Neh. iii. 12.
35. Job.—Job i. 21.
36. Satan.—Job ii. 4.
37. Job.—Job iii. 17.
38. Job.—Job xiii. 15.
39. The fool.—Psalms xiv. 1.
40. David.—Psalms xvi. 6.
41. David.—Psalms cxvi. 11.
42. Solomon.—Prov. xvi. 32.
43. Solomon.—Prov. xviii. 24.
44. He that covereth his sins.—Prov. xxviii. 13.
45. Agur.—Prov. xxx. 8.
46. Solomon.—Eccl. viii. 8.
47. Ahaz.—Isaiah vii. 14.
48. Isaiah, God's command.—Isaiah xxxiv. 4.
49. The Jews.—Jer. viii. 20.
50. Jeremiah.—Jer. xiii. 23.
51. Elamites.—Jer. xlix. 36.
52. Darius.—Dan. v. 31.
53. The prophet Hosea.—Hosea iv. 17.
54. Amos.—Amos i. 1.
55. Jonah.—Jonah i. 2.
56. Habakkuk.—Hab. iii. 2.
57. Haggai.—Hag. i. 6.
58. Zechariah.—Zech. xiv. 7.
59. Malachi.—Mal. iii. 8.
60. It was ground to powder, mixed with water, and the Israelites forced to drink it.—Ex. xxxii. 20.
61. For a year. "He shall be free at home for one year, and he shall cheer his wife which he hath taken."—Deut. xxiv. 5.

NEW TESTAMENT QUERIES

1. Who was reigning in Judah when Joseph returned from Egypt with the child Jesus?
2. Who were the first called of the disciples?
3. Whose birthday was celebrated by dancing?
4. With whom did Jesus spend his last Sabbath?
5. Who was the only person, according to the New Testament, who raised a voice in behalf of Jesus during the trial?
6. Who rose from the dead without the interposition of the prophets, Jesus, or the apostles?
7. What leader was seen 1500 years after his death?
8. Of whom was it said, "She hath done what she could"?
9. What are the first recorded words of Jesus?
10. Who paid the hotel bill of a man who had been robbed?
11. To what king did Christ refer when he said, "Go ye and tell that fox"?
12. Who asked Jesus, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem?"
13. Who testified of Jesus that he was both his successor and predecessor?
14. By whom are we told to "search the Scriptures"?
15. What is the test of discipleship?
16. Whose curiosity was checked by Christ, and how?
17. Who is pronounced a doctor of the law?
18. Who was reading the writings of a prophet while riding in a chariot?
19. What were Paul's first words after conversion?
20. Who was the first apostle to raise a dead person to life?
21. Which of the disciples was a tanner?
22. Who, in speaking of Christ, said, "He went about doing good"?

23. Who was the first Christian convert in Europe?
24. What Athenian judge was converted under Paul's preaching?
25. What emperor banished all Jews from Rome?
26. Of whom was it said, "He was mighty in the Scriptures"?
27. What prisoner in chains stood on the steps of a castle and addressed a multitude?
28. Who was St. Paul's teacher?
29. What unrighteous judge trembled before a prisoner in chains?
30. Who was captain of the guard that took Paul to Rome?
31. Who was the chief man on the island of Melita, where Paul was shipwrecked?
32. How long did Paul preach at Rome?
33. What apostle expressed a desire to travel in Spain?
34. What Christian was recommended to the apostles for hospitality?
35. What woman carried St. Paul's epistle to the Romans?
36. Who said, "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow"?
37. Who said, "Hold fast to that which is good"?
38. What example have we of early piety in the New Testament?
39. Name three heathen writers whom St. Paul quotes.
40. Who said, "To the pure all things are pure"?
41. Who said, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above"?
42. Who said, "The devils also believe that there is one God"?
43. Name three persons whose afflictions were a source of enjoyment.
44. What member of the primitive Church tried the patience of the loving disciple John?
45. God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of whom?
46. Give the name of two angels mentioned in the Bible.
47. Who was the first Christian martyr?
48. From what place in Palestine did the Ascension take place?

Answers to New Testament Queries

1. Archelaus.—Matt. ii. 22.
2. John and Andrew.—John i. 37–41.
3. Herod's.—Matt. xiv. 6.
4. Simon, the Leper.—Matt. xxvi. 6.
5. The wife of Pontius Pilate.—Matt. xxvii. 19.
6. "The Saints that slept arose."—Matt. xxvii. 52.
7. Moses, by Peter, James, and John.—Mark ix. 2 and 5.
8. The woman who poured the ointment on the Saviour's head.—Mark xiv. 3, 8.
9. "How is it that ye sought me?"—Luke ii. 49.
10. The good Samaritan.—Luke x. 35.
11. King Herod.—Luke xiii. 31, 32.
12. Cleopas.—Luke xxiv. 18.
13. John the Baptist.—John i. 15.
14. Our Saviour.—John v. 39.
15. "If ye have love one to another."—John xiii. 35.
16. Peter's.—John xxi. 21, 22.
17. Gamaliel.—Acts v. 34.
18. The eunuch.—Acts viii. 30.
19. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—Acts ix. 6.
20. Peter.—Acts ix. 40.
21. Simon.—Acts x. 6.
22. Simon Peter.—Acts x. 38.
23. Lydia, of Thyatira.—Acts xvi. 14.
24. Dionysius.—Acts xvii. 34.
25. Claudius.—Acts xviii. 2.
26. Apollos.—Acts xviii. 24.
27. Paul.—Acts xxi. 40.
28. Gamaliel.—Acts xxii. 3.
29. Felix.—Acts xxiv. 25.
30. Julius.—Acts xxvii. 1.
31. Publius.—Acts xxviii. 7.
32. Two years.—Acts xxviii. 30.
33. St. Paul.—Rom. xv. 24, 28.
34. Gaius.—Rom. xvi. 23.
35. Phebe.—Rom. xvi. 1.
36. Paul, to the Philippians.—Phil. ii. 10.
37. Paul.—I. Thess. v. 21.
38. Timothy.—II. Tim. iii. 15.
39. Aratus.—Acts xvii. 28. Menander.—I. Cor. xv. 33. Epimenides.—Titus i. 12.
40. Paul.—Titus i. 15.
41. James.—James i. 17.
42. James.—James ii. 19.
43. Paul.—Rom. v. 3; II. Cor. xii. 9, 10. James.—James i. 2. Peter.—I. Peter ii. 25.
44. Diotrephes.—III. John 9.
45. Those who have washed their robes and made them white.—Rev. vii. 13, 17.
46. Gabriel.—Dan. ix. 21; Luke i. 19. Michael.—Jude i. 9; Rev. xii. 7.
47. Stephen.—Acts vii. 54, 60.
48. Bethany.—Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

CURIOUS FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

The following interesting statements, said to be the fruits of three years' labor by Dr. Thomas Hartwell

Horne, and given by him in his "Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures," are based upon an old English Bible of the King James version.

Old Testament.—Number of books, 39; chapters, 929; verses, 23,214; words, 593,493; letters, 2,728,100.

New Testament.—Number of books, 27; chapters, 260; verses, 7,959; words, 181,253; letters, 838,380.

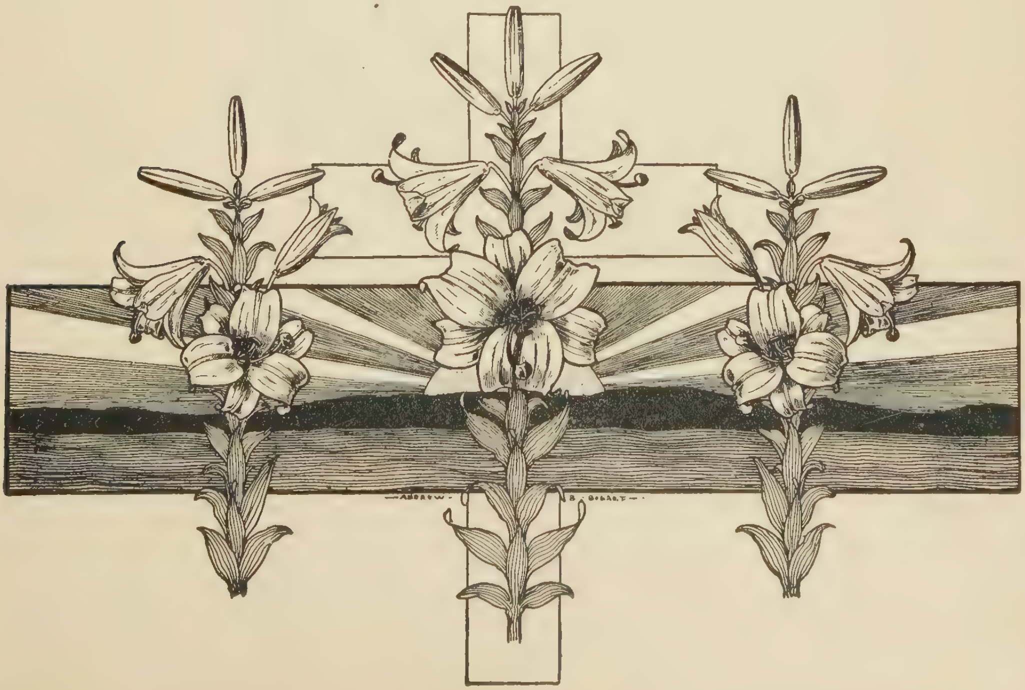
The Bible.—Total number of books, 66; chapters, 1,189; verses, 31,173; words, 773,746; letters, 3,566,480.

Apocrypha.—Number of books, 14; chapters, 184; verses, 6,031; words, 125,185.

Old Testament.—The middle book of the Old Testament is Proverbs. The middle chapter is Job xxix. The middle verse is II. Chronicles xx., between verses 17 and 18. The shortest book is Obadiah. The shortest verse is I. Chronicles i. 25. The word "and" occurs 35,543 times. Ezra vii. 21 contains all the letters of our alphabet. The word "Selah" occurs 73 times and only in the poetical books. II. Kings xix. and Isaiah xxxvii. are alike. The Book of Esther does not contain the words God or Lord. The last two verses of II. Chronicles and the opening verses of the Book of Ezra are alike. Ezra ii. and Nehemiah vii. are alike. There are nearly 30 books mentioned, but not found in the Bible, consisting of civil records and other ancient writings now nearly all lost. About 26 of these are alluded to in the Old Testament.

New Testament.—The middle book is II. Thessalonians. The middle chapter is between Romans xiii. and xiv. The middle verse is Acts xvii. 17. The smallest book is II. John. The smallest verse is John xi. 35. The word "and" occurs 10,684 times. The name Jesus occurs nearly 700 times in the Gospels and Acts, and in the Epistles less than 70 times. The name Christ alone occurs about 60 times in the Gospels and Acts, and about 240 times in the Epistles and Revelation. The term Jesus Christ occurs 5 times in the Gospels.

The Bible.—The middle book is Micah. The middle (and smallest) chapter is Psalm cxvii. The middle verse is Psalm cxviii. 8. The middle line is II. Chronicles iv. 16; the largest book is that of the Psalms; the largest chapter is Psalm cxix. The word Jehovah (or Lord) occurs 6,855 times. The word "and" occurs 46,227 times. The number of authors of the Bible is 50. The Bible was not until modern times divided into chapters and verses. The division of chapters has been attributed to Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of William I.; but the real author of this division was Cardinal Hugo de Sancto-Caro, about 1236. The number of languages on earth is estimated at 3,000; the Bible or parts of it have been rendered into only about 180, or, languages and dialects together, 345.



A CHILD'S CALENDAR OF GOLDEN THOUGHTS

A GOLDEN WEEK

BY HENRY DRUMMOND AND J. R. MILLER

SUNDAY MORNING

REFLECT the character of Christ, and you will become like Christ. To become like Christ is the only thing in the world worth caring for.

Henry Drummond.

IF it is the privilege of every friend of Christ to be of good cheer, no matter what the circumstances of his life may be, . . . we ought always to be cheerful. We ought to carry music in our heart and the light of joy in our face wherever we go, in whatsoever experiences we find ourselves. . . . No other one in the world has such secrets of joy as has the Christian.

J. R. Miller.

SUNDAY EVENING

WHO is Christ? He who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick. And where is Christ? Where? Whoso shall receive a little child in my name receiveth me.

Henry Drummond.

CHEERFULNESS is a good angel to the man who keeps it in his heart. It helps him to be more than conqueror in the struggle of life. He who is always of good cheer is a master of circumstances and conditions. Nothing can defeat him. Cheerfulness is courage.

J. R. Miller.

MONDAY MORNING

HAVE you heard that there is another life—a life which cannot die, a life which, linked to your life, will make the past still bright with pardon, and the future rich with hope? This life is in his Son.

Henry Drummond.

THE truest way to live is to yield to no burden; to carry the heaviest load with courage and gladness; never to let one's eyes be turned downward toward the earth, but to keep them ever lifted up to the hills.

J. R. Miller.

MONDAY EVENING

THE joyful life is the life of the larger mission, the disinterested life, the life of the overflow from self, the "more abundant life" which comes from following Christ.

Henry Drummond.

WE are never to think in our daily and hourly living what will most honor us, what will be the easiest thing, or the most profitable, but what will most honor God. . . . If we had learned this effacement of self in all our desires, whether in our work or in our praying, if God were always first in our desire, it would lift up our commonest life into a splendor radiant as that in which the angels live.

J. R. Miller.

TUESDAY MORNING

CHRISTIANITY is not a thing to be proved: it is a life to be lived. The evidence for Christianity is a Christian.

Henry Drummond.

Some people think worries are quite harmless. They never think of them as sins. But Jesus spoke very strongly against anxiety. He said we should never worry. It does no good. It grieves our Father, for it shows distrust of his love and goodness.

J. R. Miller.

TUESDAY EVENING

I cannot guarantee that the stars will shine brighter . . . or that when you waken to-morrow a new world will open before you. But I do guarantee that Christ will keep that which you have committed to him.

Henry Drummond.

We can be truest and best blessings to others only when we live victoriously ourselves. We owe it therefore to the needy sorrowing, tempted world about us, to keep our inner life calm, quiet, and strong, restful and full of sweet love, in whatsoever outer turbulence or trial or opposition we must live. The only secret is to abide in Christ.

J. R. Miller.

WEDNESDAY MORNING

No one can get joy by merely asking for it. It is one of the ripest fruits of the Christian life, and like all fruits, must be grown.

Henry Drummond.

On all sides the lives of others touch ours, and we cannot do just as we please, thinking only of ourselves, and our own comfort and good, unless we choose to be false to all the instincts of humanity, and all the requirements of the law of Christian love. We must think continually of other people.

J. R. Miller.

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Be sure that wherever the religion of Christ appears small, or forbidding, or narrow, or inhuman, you are dealing not with the whole—which is a matchless moral symmetry—but with some cold stone removed from its place, and suggesting nothing of the glorious structure from which it came.

Henry Drummond.

It is part of the debt of love we owe to our fellow-men to bring them always the best we have; not gloom and shadow and disheartenment, but cheer, hope, and joy.

J. R. Miller.

THURSDAY MORNING

Spiritual life is the sum total of the functions which resist sin. The soul's atmosphere is the daily trial, circumstance, and temptation of the world.

Henry Drummond.

Men and women are forever making the same mistake. They long to do some beautiful thing for Christ, but never think for a moment that they can do it in the things of the common days, while really the opportunity comes to them every day in the duties that seem trivial and commonplace. The common tasks of our everydays furnish us the elements which go to make the divinest deeds.

J. R. Miller.

THURSDAY EVENING

Our sanctification is not in books, or in noble enthusiasm, or in personal struggles after a better life. It is in the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Henry Drummond.

We need never vex ourselves over the smallness of our opportunities; our only care should be that we use the opportunities that are given us.

J. R. Miller.

FRIDAY MORNING

Holiness is an infinite compassion for others. Greatness is to take the common things of life and walk truly among men. Happiness is a great love and much serving.

Henry Drummond.

Our friends meet our needs, satisfy our cravings, do us good; and we do not think always of the other side—what we are to them. The essential thing is not to have friends, but to be a friend; not to receive, but to give; not what we get, but what we give.

J. R. Miller.

FRIDAY EVENING

"The greatest thing," says some one, "a man can do for his heavenly Father, is to be kind to some of his other children."

Henry Drummond.

We only begin to live when we begin to love, and we begin to love only when self dies and we live to bless others. We forget too often that we are the body of Christ in this world. The things he would do for men we must do.

J. R. Miller.

SATURDAY MORNING

There is no such beauty of character as that which comes out in unconscious ways from a life made fine by Christ.

Henry Drummond.

The gate of prayer is a gate of love. Nothing unloving can enter it. . . . Whatever other acceptable offerings we may bring to the golden gate of prayer, it will not be open to us until in our heart we bring love.

J. R. Miller.

SATURDAY EVENING

Not in the merely contemplative, but in the active, lies true hope; not only in rapture, but in reality, lies true life; not alone in the realm of ideals, but likewise among tangible things, is man's sanctification wrought.

Henry Drummond.

We put our cares into God's hands in prayer, and they do not seem to become less. We think there has been no answer to our prayers. But all the while an unseen hand has been quietly shaping, adjusting, and disentangling the complex affairs in our life that made us anxious. We are not conscious of it, but our prayers have been receiving continual answer in peace and blessing.

J. R. Miller.

A GOLDEN MONTH

BY HENRY DRUMMOND

FIRST DAY

The infallible receipt for happiness is to do good: and the infallible receipt for doing good is to abide in Christ.

SECOND DAY

Life is not a holiday, but an education.

THIRD DAY

To be willing is a rarer grace than to be doing the will of God. For he who is willing may sometimes have nothing to do, and must only be willing to wait.

FOURTH DAY

Every character has an inward spring, let Christ be it. Every action has a keynote, let Christ see it.

FIFTH DAY

There is no higher life than helping others.

SIXTH DAY

Joy lies in mere constant living in Christ's presence, with all that implies of peace and shelter, and of love.

SEVENTH DAY

The end of life is simply to do God's will . . . whether that be working or waiting, or winning or losing, or suffering or recovering, or living or dying.

EIGHTH DAY

Strength of character may be acquired at work: but beauty of character is learned at home.

NINTH DAY

To become like Christ is the only thing in the world worth caring for, the thing before which every ambition of man is folly, and all lower achievements vain.

TENTH DAY

The final test of religion is not religiousness but love.

ELEVENTH DAY

All you have ever said or done or left undone, is registered forever in your own nature.

TWELFTH DAY

Great trials come at lengthened intervals, and we rise to breast them; but it is the petty friction of our everyday life with one another, the jar of business or of work, the discord of the domestic circle, the collapse of an ambition, the crossing of our will, the taking down of our conceit, which make inward peace impossible.

THIRTEENTH DAY

Do not isolate yourself. Be among men, and among things, and among troubles, and difficulties, and obstacles.

FOURTEENTH DAY

Pray for yet a little while to redeem the wasted years.

FIFTEENTH DAY

This is what Christianity is for, to teach men the Art of Life, and its whole curriculum lies in one word—"Learn of Me."

SIXTEENTH DAY

By what we have not done, *by sins of omission* we are judged.

SEVENTEENTH DAY

Lord Jesus, as thou wilt! if among thorns I go,
Still sometimes here and there let a few roses
blow.
No! Thou on earth along the thorny path hast
gone;
Then lead me after thee, my Lord; thy will be
done.

EIGHTEENTH DAY

Christianity wants nothing in the world so much as sunny people.

NINETEENTH DAY

Remain side by side with him who loved us and gave himself for us: and you too will become a center of power, a permanently attractive force.

TWENTIETH DAY

There are temptations so awful that the strong thing to do is simply to step aside and let them pass.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY

It is astonishing how large a part of Christ's precepts is devoted solely to the inculcation of happiness. How much of his life, too, was spent simply in making people happy!

TWENTY-SECOND DAY

It is not hard to give up our rights. . . . The difficult thing is to give up ourselves. The more difficult thing still is not to seek things for ourselves at all.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

Where is capacity for heaven to come from, if it be not developed on earth? The discipline of life is a preparation for meeting the Father. When we arrive there to behold his beauty, we must have the educated eye; and that must be trained here.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

This is the hope for the world, that we shall learn to love, and in learning that, unlearn all anger and wrath and evil-speaking and malice and bitterness.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

Religion is not a strange or added thing, but the inspiration of the secular life, the breathing of an eternal spirit through the temporal world.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now . . . for I shall not pass this way again.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

The true discovery of a character is the discovery of its ideals.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

No form of vice, not worldliness, nor greed of gold, nor drunkenness itself, does more to unchristianize society than evil temper.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY

HEAVEN lies within, in kindness, in unselfishness, in faith, in love, in service. To get these in, get Christ in.

THIRTIETH DAY

A BREATH of prayer in the morning, and the morning life is sure. A breath of prayer in the evening, and the evening blessing comes.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY

YOU will find as you look back upon your life that the moments when you have really lived are the moments when you have done things in the spirit of love.

A THOUGHT FOR EVERY DAY IN THE MONTH

1

GOD make my life a little light
Within the world to glow;
A tiny flame that burneth bright
Wherever I may go.

2

Now, when you come to think of it,
The day is what you make it;
And whether good or whether bad,
Depends on how you take it.

3

THERE are bridges to cross and the way is long,
But a purpose in life will make you strong;
Keep on your lips a cheerful song,
And always look up, look up!

4

REMEMBER how easy it is to lose opportunities, and how difficult it is to regain them; therefore, when they present themselves, make every effort to improve them.

5

ALL the little things are useful,
And the children must be, too;
There is always work made ready
For the little hands to do.

6

ARE you almost discontented
With life, little man?
I will tell you a wonderful trick
That will bring you contentment,
If anything can:
Do something for somebody, quick!

7

Do that duty which lies nearest to thee, and which thou knowest to be thy duty; thy second duty will have already become clearer.

8

ONE of the greatest lessons of life is to learn not to do what one likes, but to like what one does.

9

THE world is wide and needy,
And if we all are true,
The world will be the better
For what we workers do.

10

ONE by one thy duties wait thee;
Let thy whole strength go to each:
Let no future dreams elate thee;
Learn thou first what these can teach.

11

Between the great things that we cannot do, and the small things we will not do, the danger is that we shall do nothing.

12

Had I an arm to reach the skies,
Or grasp creation in a span,
I'd not be measured by my size—
The mind's the standard of the man.

13

Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed.

14

The books which help you most are those which make you think the most.

15

To know what is right and fear to do it, this is cowardice.

16

Dare to do right, dare to be true,
You have a work no other can do.

17

There's many a battle fought daily
The world knows nothing about;
There's many a brave little soldier
Whose strength puts a legion to rout:
And he who fights sin single-handed
Is more of a hero, I say,
Than he who leads soldiers to battle,
And conquers by arms in the fray.

18

Laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him.

19

When you've work to do, boys,
Do it with a will;
Those who reach the top, boys,
First must climb the hill.

20

Do not try to pass for more than you are worth; if you do your duty, your good qualities of head and heart will be discovered and appreciated.

21

Sincerity is to speak as we think, to do as we pretend and profess, to perform and make good what we promise, and really to be what we would seem and appear to be.

22

Let falsehood be a stranger to thy lips:
Shame on the policy that first began
To tamper with the heart to hide its thoughts!
And double shame on that unrighteous tongue
That sold its honesty, and told a lie!

23

One broken promise brings twenty doubts; therefore we should thoroughly consider what we undertake before we make a promise.

24

When alone, we have our thoughts to watch; in the family, our temper; in society, our tongue.

25

He who has overcome one evil temper has acquired moral force to overcome another.

26

All who joy would win
Must share it. Happiness was born a twin.

27

A singer sang a song of cheer,
And the great world whistled and smiled,
For he sang of the love of a Father dear,
And the trust of a little child.

And the souls that before had forgotten to pray
Looked up, and went singing along their way.

28

To have what we want is riches; to be able to do without is power.

29

Nothing great is lightly won,
  Nothing won is lost;
Every good deed nobly done
  Will repay the cost.

30

Look up and not down,
Look forward and not back,
Look out and not in, and
Lend a hand.

31

A sacred burden is this life ye bear;
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly,
Stand up, and walk beneath it steadfastly:
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin;
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.

LEGENDS OF JESUS

Like ourselves, the early Christians longed to know more about the boyhood of Jesus than is told in the New Testament. They wanted to know something of what he said and did as a child, and the kind of games he played. Gradually a number of legends grew up round his early life, and in the second and third centuries many were written down in a style that tries to imitate that of the Gospels. Many of the stories are foolish, but the following are interesting as showing what kind of boy the early Christians supposed Jesus to have been.

THE WISE MEN OF THE EAST

When the wise men from the East came to Bethlehem to see the infant Jesus, Mary was too poor to give them any costly presents in return, but she took off the swaddling bands from her baby, and gave those to the wise men to take back to their distant home.

As soon as the wise men came to their own country again, they showed the swaddling bands, and when they told of the wonderful child whom they had seen, the princes of the land declared that the swaddling bands should be kept among the treasures of their country.

THE ROBBERS WHO FLED

While in Egypt, Joseph and Mary were traveling in a part of the country that was quite unsafe for passengers, owing to the bands of robbers that had their camps there.

When Joseph and Mary came near one of the camps, the robbers listened, and suddenly a great fright seized them. They could hear the sounds of the travelers, but their fear magnified these sounds into the noise of a band of soldiers.

Leaving their possessions and their prisoners in a cave, they fled; and when Joseph and Mary, with Jesus, came to the cave, they released the prisoners, who were able to recover their property and proceed on their journeys.

THE GIFTS OF THE EGYPTIANS

Joseph and Mary were about to set out on their return journey from Egypt to Nazareth, when many of the wise men and notable women of the city in which they were staying came to accompany them to the gates.

Outside the city Joseph dismissed the company, but before the family departed, one of the escort called the child Jesus to him, and, out of compassion for his poverty, held out a few coppers. Others of those who had escorted the family from the city did the same, and, although Jesus blushed at having a need for such gifts, and felt inclined to refuse, yet for the sake of his parents he took the charitable offerings, and taught a lesson in humility.

THE THIEVES IN THE DESERT

Joseph and Mary were traveling through a desert country when Jesus was a child, and they suddenly came upon a robbers' camp. The two leaders of the robbers, Titus and Dumachus, saw them; and Titus said to his companion:

"I beseech you let these people go by quietly and do not wake our comrades."

But Dumachus said he would not agree. Titus then offered him a sum of money if he would remain quiet and do as he was asked, and Dumachus at last promised.

The child Jesus then turned to his mother and said:

"When thirty years have passed by, the Jews will crucify me at Jerusalem, and these two thieves will be upon crosses at the same time—Titus on my right hand and Dumachus on my left—and from that time Titus shall go before me into paradise." And so it came to pass.

THE BOY JUDAS ISCARIOT

Jesus was one day playing with other children, when a boy came and sat down by his side. For a time the boy was quiet, and behaved like other children, but suddenly he changed and began to try to bite Jesus.

When he was unable to do this he flew into a violent rage, and struck Jesus on the right side, so that he cried with the pain. The boy then went away, and he grew up to be Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his Master.

THE WONDERFUL BOY

There was at Jerusalem a schoolmaster named Zacchæus, and to him Jesus was sent that he might be taught his letters. When the schoolmaster had told his scholar to pronounce A, he went on to B, but Jesus said:

"Tell me first the meaning of A, and then I will pronounce B."

The master was angry at being questioned by a boy, but Jesus went on to explain the meanings of all the letters himself, so that the master greatly marveled, and said:

"I believe this boy was born before Noah; he knows more than any master."

And his parents could find no master learned enough to teach their boy.

IN NAZARETH*

Once, when Jesus was only five years old, he sat on the doorstep outside his father's workshop, in Nazareth, and made clay cuckoos from a lump of clay which the potter across the way had given him. He was happier than usual. All the children in the quarter had told Jesus that the potter was a disobliging man, who wouldn't let himself be coaxed, either by soft glances or honeyed words, and he had never dared ask aught of him. But, you see, he hardly knew how it had come about. He had only stood on his doorstep and, with yearning eyes, looked upon the neighbor working at his molds, and then that neighbor had come over from his stall and given him so much clay that it would have been enough to finish a whole wine-jug.

On the stoop of the next house sat Judas, his face covered with bruises and his clothes full of rents, which he had acquired during his continual fights with street urchins. For the moment he was quiet, he neither quarreled nor fought, but worked with a bit of clay, just as Jesus did. But this clay he had not been able to procure for himself. He hardly dared venture within sight of the potter, who complained that he was in the habit of throwing stones at his fragile wares, and would have driven him away with a beating. It was Jesus who had divided his portion with him.

When the two children had finished their clay cuckoos, they stood the birds up in a ring in front of them. These looked just as clay cuckoos have always looked. They had big, round lumps to stand on in place of feet, short tails, no necks, and almost imperceptible wings.

But, at all events, one saw at once a difference in the work of the little playmates. Judas's birds were so crooked that they tumbled over continually; and no matter how hard he worked with his clumsy little fingers, he couldn't get their bodies neat and well formed. Now and then he glanced slyly at Jesus, to see how he managed to make his birds as smooth and even as the oak-leaves in the forests on Mount Tabor.

As bird after bird was finished, Jesus became happier and happier. Each looked more beautiful to him than the last, and he regarded them all with pride and affection. They were to be his playmates, his little brothers; they should sleep in his bed, keep him company, and sing to him when his mother left him. Never before had he thought himself so rich; never again could he feel alone or forsaken.

The big brawny water-carrier came walking along, and right after him came the huckster, who sat joggingly on his donkey between the large empty willow baskets. The water-carrier laid his hand on Jesus's curly head and asked him about his birds; and Jesus told him that they had names and that they could sing. All the little birds were come to him from foreign lands, and told him things which only he and they knew. And Jesus spoke in such a way that both the water-carrier and the huckster forgot about their tasks for a full hour, to listen to him.

But when they wished to go farther, Jesus pointed to Judas. "See what pretty birds Judas makes!" he said.

Then the huckster good-naturedly stopped his donkey and asked Judas if his birds also had names and could sing. But Judas knew nothing of this. He was stubbornly silent and did not raise his eyes from his work, and the huckster angrily kicked one of his birds and rode on.

In this manner the afternoon passed, and the sun sank so far down that its beams could come in through the low city gate, which stood at the end of the street and was decorated with a Roman eagle. This sunshine, which came at the close of the day, was perfectly rose-red—as if it had become mixed with blood—and it colored everything which came in its path, as it filtered through the narrow street. It painted the potter's vessels as well as the log which creaked under

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the woodman's saw, and the white veil that covered Mary's face.

But the loveliest of all was the sun's reflection as it shone on the little water-puddles which had gathered in the big, uneven cracks in the stones that covered the street. Suddenly Jesus stuck his hand in the puddle nearest him. He had conceived the idea that he would paint his gray birds with the sparkling sunbeams which had given such pretty color to the water, the house-walls, and everything around him.

The sunshine took pleasure in letting itself be captured by him, like paint in a paint-pot; and when Jesus spread it over the little clay birds, it lay still and bedecked them from head to feet with a diamond-like luster.

Judas, who every now and then looked at Jesus to see if he made more and prettier birds than his, gave a shriek of delight when he saw how Jesus painted his clay cuckoos with the sunshine, which he caught from the water-pools. Judas also dipped his hand in the shining water and tried to catch the sunshine.

But the sunshine wouldn't be caught by him. It slipped through his fingers; and no matter how fast he tried to move his hands to get hold of it, it got away, and he couldn't procure a pinch of color for his poor birds.

"Wait, Judas!" said Jesus. "I'll come and paint your birds."

"No, you sha'n't touch them!" cried Judas. "They're good enough as they are."

He rose, his eyebrows contracted into an ugly frown, his lips compressed. And he put his broad foot on the birds and transformed them, one after another, into little flat pieces of clay.

When all his birds were destroyed, he walked over to Jesus, who sat and caressed his birds—that glittered like jewels. Judas regarded them for a moment in silence; then he raised his foot and crushed one of them.

When Judas took his foot away and saw the entire little bird changed into a cake of clay, he felt so relieved that he began to laugh, and raised his foot to crush another.

"Judas," said Jesus, "what are you doing? Don't you see that they are alive and can sing?"

But Judas laughed and crushed still another bird.

Jesus looked around for help. Judas was heavily built and Jesus had not the strength to hold him back. He glanced around for his mother. She was not far away, but before she could have gone there, Judas would have had ample time to destroy the birds. The tears sprang to Jesus's eyes. Judas had already crushed four of his birds. There were only three left.

He was annoyed with his birds, who stood so calmly and let themselves be trampled upon without paying the slightest attention to the danger. Jesus clapped his hands to awaken them; then he shouted, "Fly, fly!"

Then the three birds began to move their tiny wings, and, fluttering anxiously, they succeeded in swinging themselves up to the eaves of the house, where they were safe.

But when Judas saw that the birds took to their wings and flew at Jesus's command, he began to weep. He tore his hair, as he had seen his elders do when they were in great trouble, and he threw himself at Jesus's feet.

Judas lay there and rolled in the dust before Jesus like a dog, and kissed his feet and begged that he would raise his foot and crush him, as he had done with the clay cuckoos. For Judas loved Jesus and admired and worshiped him, and at the same time hated him.

Mary, who sat all the while and watched the children's play, came up and lifted Judas in her arms and seated him on her lap, and caressed him.

"You poor child!" she said to him, "you do not know that you have attempted something which no mortal can accomplish. Don't engage in anything of this kind again, if you do not wish to become the unhappiest of mortals! What would happen to any one of us who undertook to compete with one who paints with sunbeams and blows the breath of life into dead clay?"

From the boyhood of Jesus let us pass to the hour of his crucifixion, with which imagination has connected one of the most beautiful of all the Christ legends.

ROBIN REDBREAST*

It happened at the time when our Lord created the world, when he not only made heaven and earth, but all the animals and the plants as well, at the same time giving them their names.

There have been many histories concerning that time, and if we knew them all, we should have light upon everything in this world which we cannot now comprehend.

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At that time it happened one day when our Lord sat in his paradise and painted the little birds, that the colors in our Lord's paint-pot gave out, and the goldfinch would have been without color if our Lord had not wiped all his paint-brushes on its feathers.

It was then that the donkey got his long ears, because he could not remember the name that had been given him.

No sooner had he taken a few steps over the meadows of paradise than he forgot, and three times he came back to ask his name. At last our Lord grew somewhat impatient, took him by his two ears, and said:

"Thy name is ass, ass, ass!" And while he thus spake, our Lord pulled both of his ears that the ass might hear better, and remember what was said to him. It was on the same day also that the bee was punished.

Now, when the bee was created, she began immediately to gather honey, and the animals and human beings who caught the delicious odor of the honey came and wanted to taste of it. But the bee wanted to keep it all for herself, and with her poisonous sting pursued every living creature that approached her hive. Our Lord saw this and at once called the bee to him and punished her.

"I gave thee the gift of gathering honey, which is the sweetest thing in all creation," said our Lord, "but I did not give thee the right to be cruel to thy neighbor. Remember well that when thou stingest any creature who desires to taste of thy honey, thou shalt surely die!"

Ah, yes! It was at that time, too, that the cricket became blind and the ant missed her wings. So many strange things happened on that day!

Our Lord sat there, big and gentle, and planned and created all day long, and toward evening he conceived the idea of making a little gray bird. "Remember your name is Robin Redbreast," said our Lord to the bird, as soon as it was finished. Then he held it in the palm of his open hand and let it fly.

After the bird had been testing his wings a while, and had seen something of the beautiful world in which he was destined to live, he became curious to see what he himself was like. He noticed that he was entirely gray, and that his breast was just as gray as all the rest of him. Robin Redbreast twisted and turned in all directions as he viewed himself in the mirror of a clear lake, but he couldn't find a single red feather. Then he flew back to our Lord.

Our Lord sat there on his throne, big and gentle. Out of his hands came butterflies that fluttered about his head; doves cooed on his shoulders; and out of the earth beneath him grew the rose, the lily, and the daisy.

The little bird's heart beat heavily with fright, but with easy curves he flew nearer and nearer our Lord, till at last he rested on our Lord's hand. Then our Lord asked what the little bird wanted. "I only wish to ask you about one thing," said the little bird. "What is it you wish to know?" said our Lord. "Why should I be called Redbreast, when I am all gray, from the bill to the very end of my tail? Why am I called Redbreast when I do not possess one single red feather?" The bird looked beseechingly on our Lord with his tiny black eyes—then turned his head. About him he saw pheasants all red under a sprinkle of gold-dust, parrots with marvelous red neck-bands, cocks with red combs, to say nothing about the butterflies, the goldfinches, and the roses! And naturally he thought how little he needed—just one tiny drop of color on his breast, and he too would be a beautiful bird, and his name would fit him. "Why should I be called Redbreast when I am so entirely gray?" asked the bird once again, and waited for our Lord to say: "Ah, my friend, I see that I have forgotten to paint your breast-feathers red, but wait a moment and it shall be done."

But our Lord only smiled a little and said: "I have called you Robin Redbreast, and Robin Redbreast shall your name be, but you must look to it that you yourself earn your red breast-feathers." Then our Lord lifted his hand and let the bird fly once more—out into the world.

The bird flew down into paradise, meditating deeply. What could a little bird like him do to earn for himself red feathers? The only thing he could think of was to make his nest in a brier-bush. He built it among the thorns in the close thicket. It looked as if he waited for a rose-leaf to cling to his throat and give him color.

COUNTLESS years had come and gone since that day, which was the happiest in all the world! Human beings had already advanced so far that they had learned to cultivate the earth and sail the seas. They had procured clothes and ornaments for themselves, and had long since learned to build big temples and great cities—such as Thebes, Rome, and Jerusalem.

THEN there dawned a *new* day, one that will long be remembered in the world's history. On the morning of this day Robin Redbreast sat upon a little naked hillock outside of Jerusalem's walls, and sang to his young ones, who rested in a tiny nest in a brier-bush.

Robin Redbreast told the little ones all about that wonderful day of creation, and how the Lord had given names to everything, just as each Redbreast had told it ever since the first Redbreast had heard God's word, and gone out of God's hand. "And mark you," he ended sorrowfully, "so many years have gone, so many roses have bloomed, so many little birds have come out of their eggs since Creation Day, but Robin Redbreast is still a little gray bird. He has not yet succeeded in gaining his red feathers."

The little young ones opened wide their tiny bills, and asked if their forebears had never tried to do any great thing to earn the priceless red color.

"We have all done what we could," said the little bird, "but we have all gone amiss. Even the first Robin Redbreast met one day another bird exactly like himself, and he began immediately to love it with such a mighty love that he could feel his breast burn. 'Ah!' he thought then, 'now I understand! It was our Lord's meaning that I should love with so much ardor that my breast should grow red in color from the very warmth of the love that lives in my heart.' But he missed it, as all those who came after him have missed it, and as even you shall miss it."

The little young ones twittered, utterly bewildered, and already began to mourn because the red color would not come to beautify their little, downy gray breasts.

"We had also hoped that song would help us," said the grown-up bird, speaking in long-drawn-out tones—"the first Robin Redbreast sang until his heart swelled within him, he was so carried away, and he dared to hope anew. 'Ah!' he thought, 'it is the glow of the song which lives in my soul that will color my breast-feathers red.' But he missed it, as all the others have missed it and as even you shall miss it." Again was heard a sad "peep" from the young ones' half-naked throats.

"We had also counted on our courage and our valor," said the bird. "The first Robin Redbreast fought bravely with other birds, until his breast flamed with the pride of conquest. 'Ah!' he thought, 'my breast-feathers shall become red from the love of battle which burns in my heart.' He, too, missed it, as all those who came after him have missed it, and as even you shall miss it." The little young ones peeped courageously that they still wished to try and win the much sought-for prize, but the bird answered them sorrowfully that it would be impossible. What could they do when so many splendid ancestors had missed the mark? What could they do more than love, sing, and fight? What could—the little bird stopped short, for out of one of the gates of Jerusalem came a crowd of people marching, and the whole procession rushed toward the hillock, where the bird had its nest. There were riders on proud horses, soldiers with long spears, executioners with nails and hammers. There were judges and priests in the procession, weeping women, and above all a mob of mad, loose people running about—a filthy, howling mob of loiterers.

The little gray bird sat trembling on the edge of his nest. He feared each instant that the little brier-bush would be trampled down and his young ones killed!

"Be careful!" he cried to the little defenseless young ones, "creep together and remain quiet. Here comes a horse that will ride right over us! Here comes a warrior with iron-shod sandals! Here comes the whole wild, storming mob!" Immediately the bird ceased his cry of warning and grew calm and quiet. He almost forgot the danger hovering over him. Finally he hopped down into the nest and spread his wings over the young ones.

"Oh! this is too terrible," said he. "I don't wish you to witness this awful sight! There are three miscreants who are going to be crucified!" And he spread his wings so that the little ones could see nothing.

They caught only the sound of hammers, the cries of anguish, and the wild shrieks of the mob.

Robin Redbreast followed the whole spectacle with his eyes, which grew big with terror. He could not take his glance from the three unfortunates.

"How terrible human beings are!" said the bird after a little while. "It isn't enough that they nail these poor creatures to a cross, but they must needs place a crown of piercing thorns upon the head of one of them. I see that the thorns have wounded his brow so that the blood flows," he continued. "And this man is so beautiful, and looks about him with such mild glances, that every one ought to love him. I feel as if an arrow were shooting through my heart, when I see him suffer!"

The little bird began to feel a stronger and stronger pity for the thorn-crowned sufferer. "Oh! if I were only my brother the eagle," thought he, "I would draw the nails from his hands, and with my strong claws I would drive away all those who torture him!" He saw how the blood trickled down from the brow of the Crucified One, and he could no longer remain quiet in his nest.

"Even if I am little and weak, I can still do something for this poor tortured one," thought the bird. Then he left his nest and flew out into the air, striking wide circles around the Crucified

One. He flew around him several times without daring to approach, for he was a shy little bird, who had never dared to go near a human being. But little by little he gained courage, flew close to him, and drew with his little bill a thorn that had become imbedded in the brow of the Crucified One. And as he did this there fell on his breast a drop of blood from the face of the Crucified One; it spread quickly and floated out and colored all the little fine breast-feathers.

Then the Crucified One opened his lips and whispered to the bird: "Because of thy compassion, thou hast won all that thy kind have been striving after, ever since the world was created."

As soon as the bird had returned to his nest his young ones cried to him: "Thy breast is red! Thy breast-feathers are redder than the roses!"

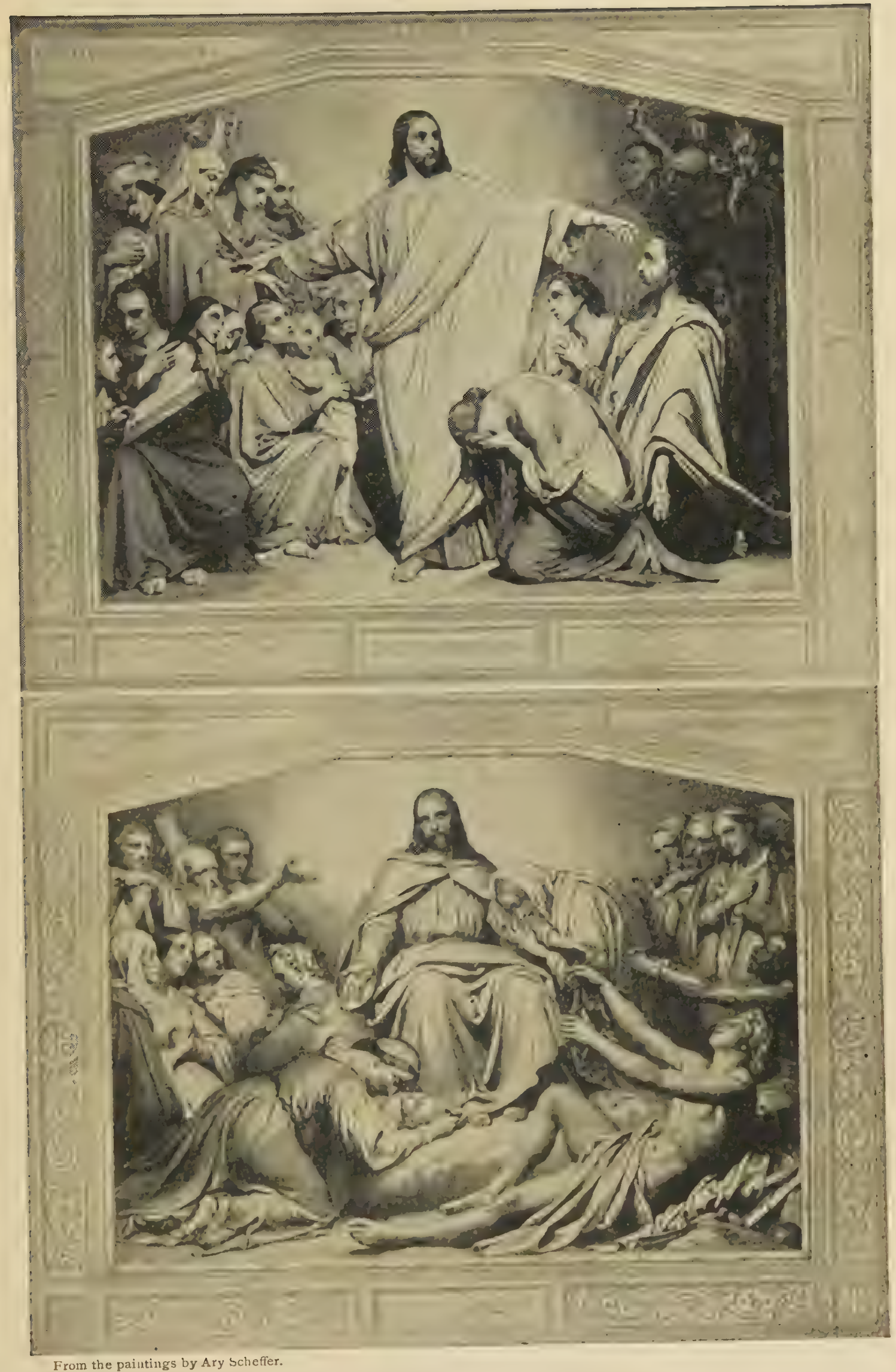
"It is only a drop of blood from the poor man's forehead," said the bird; "it will vanish as soon as I bathe in a pool or a clear well."

But no matter how much the little bird bathed, the red color did not vanish—and when his little young ones grew up, the blood-red color shone also on their breast-feathers, just as it shines on every Robin Redbreast's throat and breast until this very day.

From a carbon print by Braun & Co., of Paris and New York.

From the painting by Raphael

"THE MADONNA OF THE CHAIR."



From the paintings by Ary Scheffer.

CHRIST THE REWARDER.
CHRIST THE CONSOLER.

STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF JESUS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN

CHAPTER I

THE MESSAGE THAT CAME TO MARY

In the beginning God made the world very good, but Satan, God's enemy, brought sin into it, and so God's beautiful world was all spoiled.

The good God looked down from heaven, and it made him sorry to see the ruin that sin had made. He wanted to teach people how to be better, and it grieved him to punish them for their bad deeds, so he thought of a plan to help them. He would send his own dear Son to live on earth and show the people how to be good, and to die for their sins upon the cross.

So this is the story of God's plan and how he sent his Son to live on earth.

In a little village called Nazareth there lived a maiden called Mary. She was quite a poor maid, not grand or rich, but she was so good, so pure and gentle that God chose her out of all people in the world to help in his plan.

Mary was sitting by herself one day in her little room when suddenly she heard a voice calling her. She started, wondering who it could be, for she had thought she was alone. But when she looked up she saw, standing before her, a shining angel, one of God's messengers sent down from heaven.

The angel was very beautiful and looked kindly at her, but Mary was a little afraid, for she had never seen an angel before. She wondered why he had come to her and she waited trembling to hear him speak.

But when she heard his gentle voice she soon forgot to be afraid. He called her by her own name, Mary, as if he knew her well, and then he told her that God was so well pleased with her that he was going to send her a little baby. There were many little babies in the world but this baby would be different from any other, for he was God's own Son, the King of heaven.

Mary listened quietly to all that the angel said and did not ask any questions. She did not even wonder why such a poor maiden as she was should be chosen to be the mother of the King, but she humbly bowed her head before the angel and said she was ready to do whatever God wished.

It was in the springtime that the angel came to bring God's message to Mary, the time when all the flowers begin to wake up, and the trees put on their dresses of green leaves. But the days and months went by and it was cold bleak winter before the promised baby came.

Mary had set out on a long journey those cold wintry days. She was obliged to go to the far-off village of Bethlehem, and Joseph, her husband, went with her. He took great care of her, but the way was long and Mary was very tired by the time they reached their journey's end. They went at once to the village inn where strangers were allowed to stay, but when they asked if they might come in and rest they were told that the inn was quite full and there was no room for them at all. Perhaps if they had been rich people some one would have made room for them, but no one cared to trouble about such poor-looking people.

At last, however, they found a place where they could stay all night. But it was only a stable where an ox and an ass were feeding together and where there was a little straw to rest upon.

And it was on that night, in the little cold, bare stable, that the baby was born. The Son of God left his beautiful home in heaven, where the shining angels live, and came to earth as a tiny, helpless baby, and was born in a poor stable.

There was no soft pillow for his head, only a handful of straw; no comfortable cradle where he might be rocked to sleep, but only the wooden manger which held the food for the ox and the ass. There were no shining angels to wait on him, only his poor sweet mother; no fine soft clothes to wrap him in, but only a few strips of linen to wind round his little limbs.

Would any one have guessed that this was really a baby King, with no servants, no palace, no fine clothes? Ah! but his mother knew, for the angel told her, and very soon other people were to know the wonderful news as well.

CHAPTER II

HOW THE ANGEL BROUGHT GOOD NEWS

On the same night as the baby was born in the village of Bethlehem there were some shepherds in the fields not far off taking care of their sheep. In that country there were many wild beasts that prowled about all night, and they would try to snatch a lamb from the flock if the shepherd was not very quick and watchful. So these shepherds would make fires of dry branches that the light might frighten away the evil beasts, and then they would sit keeping watch all the long night under the stars.

They had sat watching for some time that cold night when suddenly a bright light shone around them, brighter than the glow of the fire, more shining than the starlight. And in the middle of this beautiful light they saw an angel standing quite near to them.

The shepherds were terribly afraid as they looked—the strange light was so bright and the shining angel stood so near. But the angel saw how frightened they were and told them there was nothing to be afraid of. The good news which he brought was so full of joy that it ought to make every one in the whole world glad and happy.

He told them that not very far off in the village of Bethlehem a little baby had been born that night—a baby who was God's own Son, who had come to earth to show people how to be good and happy and to save them from their sins.

And then the angel went on to tell the wondering shepherds how they would know that this news was true. They had only to go to the little village and look in the poor stable and there they would find the baby lying in a manger.

The dazzling light grew brighter and brighter as the angel spoke, and suddenly, when the good news had all been told, it seemed as if heaven opened and the whole sky was full of shining angels singing and praising God. How could they stay in heaven when the King had just come to earth, when God in his glory had been so good, and was sending peace and kindness into the world? So together they sang their Christmas song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Then the light faded, the angels went back to heaven, and the shepherds were left alone again in the quiet fields with their sheep. But they did not wait there long or wonder what they should do next. The angel had told them where they would find the new-born King, and they set out at once to seek him. They knew that God would take care of their sheep while they were away, so they all went together as quickly as they could and never stopped until they reached the little village.

And there, in the poor stable, just as the angel had said, they found the little baby lying in the manger, with his mother, Mary, watching over him, and the ox and the ass close by.

Then the shepherds knelt down on the rough floor, and took off their caps and bent their heads in worship before the baby King. It did not matter to them that he wore no golden crown, that his throne was only a poor manger bed. They were thinking still of the glory of those shining angels, and, like Mary, they knew he was indeed a King.

Perhaps they brought him little presents, a soft lamb's fleece to wrap him in, a loaf of their own bread, or a handful of fruit. They would want to give him the very best they had, but the best of all presents they brought to him was the love of their hearts. Then they went back to look after their sheep, but they never forgot the joy of that night.

Mary's gentle heart was glad too, as she sat and rocked her baby to sleep. She would always remember the visit of these poor shepherds, for they were the first to come to greet the little King.

CHAPTER III

THE WISE MEN AND THE STAR

The next people who came to worship the new-born King were not at all like those poor shepherds, and they learned the good news in quite a different way.

Very far off in another country there lived three wise men who knew a great deal about the stars. They would spend whole nights looking up into the sky, learning to count the stars and calling each one by its own name. These men were looking up as usual into the sky one night when they saw a star which they had never seen before. It was brighter than any of the other stars, and they knew at once that it was quite a new one, and that it meant that something wonderful had happened on earth, that some king had been born into the world.

The wise men felt they could not rest until they had found out what this wonderful star could mean. So they packed up their things and took their camels and set out to follow the star wherever it should lead them. They did not know at all where they were going, but the beautiful star always pointed the way. It led them on and on, a long journey, until they came to a great city called Jerusalem which was not very far from the village of Bethlehem. The king of the country lived in that city. His name was Herod, and he was a bad, cruel man.

Now, when the wise men reached the great city they went at once to the palace and asked if there had been a baby king born there, and then they told all about the new star they had seen and how they felt sure it meant that a king had been born somewhere. They told, too, how the star had led them from their far-away home until it had brought them to that city.

Herod, the wicked king, was troubled and angry when he heard this. He did not like to think that another king had been born in his country who might take away his crown and his palace and be king instead of him. Where could this wonderful baby be? No one had even heard of him. The best plan would be to let the wise men go on and find him for themselves. So he sent them away, but told them as soon as they found the baby to be sure to come back to tell him all about it. The cruel king really meant to kill the baby if he could find out where he was. But he pretended to the wise men that he too was anxious to give him presents and worship him.

The wise men promised Herod to do as he asked, and then they set out again on their journey. They felt very sorrowful when they started, for it seemed so difficult to find the new-born King for whom they were seeking. But, oh! how glad they were when they looked up into the sky and saw there again the bright new star pointing the way as it had done before. They went on gladly now, following the star until they came to the little village of Bethlehem. There the star stopped, and there they found the little baby King, and just as the shepherds had done, they knelt down and worshiped him, bringing out their splendid presents fit for any king, and laying them at the baby's feet.

Then with happy hearts the wise men set out to return to their own country. But they did not go back to tell King Herod where they had found the baby. God had told them in a dream that the wicked king would try to kill him. So they went quietly home another way, while King Herod waited for them in his palace.

CHAPTER IV

THE BABY'S NAME

It was time now to give the baby his name, and take him to God's house, just as we take little babies to church and give them to God to be his children. We call God's house a church, but in that land it was called a temple, and the temple where they took the baby was the most wonderful and most beautiful house that ever was built.

Mary did not need to think what name she would give the baby. The angel had told her long ago that his name was to be called Jesus. It is the sweetest name in all the world because it means Saviour, one who came to save people from sin and from punishment.

It was the rule, then, that when a baby was brought to God's house the mother should bring a present with her to give to God. If the mother was rich she brought a little lamb as a present, but if she was poor and had not money enough to buy a lamb, she brought two doves or two pigeons.

So into the great, beautiful temple Mary carried her baby and her little gift of two young pigeons. No one took much notice of the poor mother and her child. They did not know that the baby was different from every other child, and that all the beautiful temple belonged to him, because he was God's Son.

Presently the priest, God's servant, would come, and then Mary would lay her baby in his arms and tell him she had brought her first-born Son to give him to God.

Then the priest would lay his hand on the little soft head, and pray God to take care of the baby all his life, and keep him safe from harm.

But when the priest had laid the baby back in his mother's arms, and she was turning to leave the temple, she was stopped by an old man called Simeon, who stood waiting close by. He told her he had waited to see the child, for God had promised he should see the baby King before he died. Simeon took Jesus from his mother's arms and held him close and tenderly. And then his heart was so full of joy and thankfulness that he began to praise God and to speak very beautiful words about the child. He called Jesus a light sent by God to lighten the world, just as sunshine comes into a dark room and makes it bright and sunny.

While Simeon was still speaking some one else came up—an old woman called Anna. She saw the old man with the baby in his arms, and heard the words he spoke. She, too, had longed to see God's Son, and so she went and stood close by and praised God too with all her heart.

Then Mary took Jesus back in her arms and carried him home. And she never forgot the words of the old man and all that had happened in the beautiful temple.

CHAPTER V

KING HEROD'S WICKED PLAN

In the grand palace at Jerusalem King Herod sat waiting for the wise men to come back to tell him if they had found the new-born King. He waited many days, always hoping for news, but after a long time he began to feel certain that the wise men did not mean to come back at all. Perhaps they had guessed that he wanted to harm the baby. This made him so very angry that he longed more than ever to kill the little King. He felt sure that the wise men had gone to Bethlehem, but how was he to know which was the baby King among all the other children in the village? Then he thought of a cruel, wicked plan, and he gave orders to his soldiers to go to Bethlehem and kill every one of the babies they found in the village, so that the little King would surely be killed among the rest.

But God was taking care of the baby and no harm could come near him. Long before the soldiers could reach the village God's angel came to Joseph in the night and told him that he must quickly get ready to set out on a journey. He must take the young child and Mary his mother and go as fast as he could away from the village and journey on until he came to a far-away country. There the baby would be safe from King Herod's wicked plans.

Joseph did not lose any time, but did exactly as the angel bade him. He did not even wait for the morning light, but while it was still dark night he put the saddle on the ass and packed up their things. Then he gently told Mary all about the soldiers that were on their way to kill the child, and how they must set out at once to escape to a place where they would be safe.

Perhaps Mary was a little frightened at first. The night was so dark and it was so terrible to think of those cruel soldiers who wanted to kill her baby. She would hold him very close in her arms, and feel how precious he was, but she knew that God would take care of her and the child, so she was not greatly afraid. Then when all was ready Joseph lifted her into the saddle, the baby lying safely sleeping in her arms, and led the ass quietly out of the village. No one saw them go, for it was still night. Only the kind stars looked down and gave them a little light to find their way, and I think the angels too were there, guarding the sleeping child.

So when the soldiers came to the village and cruelly killed all the little children there, they did not kill the baby Jesus. He was far away by that time, lying safe and warm in his mother's arms, journeying on to the distant country where King Herod's cruel hate could not reach him.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOME AT NAZARETH

Now Herod was very angry because the wise men did not come back to tell him if they had found the new-born King. He gave orders by which the child Jesus would have been killed had not his parents, warned by God's angel, fled with him into Egypt.

After Mary and Joseph had lived for some time in that far-away country, God's angel came again one night to Joseph and told him, in a dream, that he might take the baby Jesus home now. King Herod was dead and no one would try any longer to harm the child.

So Joseph saddled the ass again and Mary got ready for the journey. But this time her heart was happy and peaceful, for there was nothing now to fear. They need not hurry or travel quickly, and they could start now in the daytime when the sun was shining instead of in the dark night. How thankful Mary was to feel that all was safe and well, that they were going home, and that she held her baby safe in her arms.

But before they reached home Joseph heard some news that troubled him. There was another king now at Jerusalem—a son of the wicked King Herod. Joseph was sorely afraid that he might be cruel and wicked too, and might wish to harm the child. So, although God had told him that there was nothing to fear, Joseph was afraid and would not go home, but turned aside and went to live in another village called Nazareth, which he thought was safer. There he set up his carpenter's shop, and Mary made a home in one of the poor little village houses.

There the child Jesus grew day by day just as other children grow, learning to work and play and growing taller and stronger as time went on. All this he did just as other children do, but there was one great difference between him and every other child. He was never naughty and he never needed to be punished. No one ever heard him say a cross or angry word. His little hand was never lifted to strike a blow, and he was never disobedient. Whatever his mother told him to do, he did it at once, and as he grew older he must often have helped her to keep the house tidy, and he must have worked, too, with Joseph in the carpenter's shop. Think what a happy home that must have been, where the child was always good and sunny-tempered, always ready to help, always kind and gentle and unselfish.

So when you think of Jesus in his happy home

Courtesy Tissot Picture Society, N. Y.

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From the paintings by J. J. Tissot.

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS.

AT FIFTY TISSOT, A FRENCH ARTIST, WENT TO PALESTINE, AND PAINTED NEARLY FIVE HUNDRED SCENES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

at Nazareth it ought to make you wish to be like him, for if you try to be like him you will be happy too. And if you ask him, he will help you to be gentle and kind and obedient. For he remembers just how it felt to be a little child like you, and he knows how difficult it sometimes is for you to be good. It was not only to help grown-up people that he came to live on earth, but to show little children too how to be good.

"For he is our childhood's pattern,
Day by day like us he grew,
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us he knew;
And he feeleth for our sadness,
And he shareth in our gladness."

CHAPTER VII

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Every year when springtime came all the people in the village and in the country round about used to go up to worship God in his beautiful temple at Jerusalem. It was a great honor to be allowed to go then to God's house, and all little children looked forward eagerly to the time when they should be twelve years old, for until they were twelve they were not allowed to go.

Joseph and Mary went every year with the rest of the people, but they were obliged to leave Jesus behind until he was twelve years old, and then on that happy day they all set out together.

All the village people, their neighbors and friends, would be going too, so it was quite a big company that set out. The journey was a long one, and they were obliged to take food to eat on the way, and something to sleep on at night, and every one was very busy and very happy. But perhaps the happiest of all was Jesus, for now at last he was going to his Father's house. He had only been there once before when he was a very little baby, so it was all new and wonderful to him now. It made him feel so close to his Father in heaven, and made him think too of the work which his Father had sent him to do.

When the time came to start for home again, Joseph and Mary went with the rest of the village people. Jesus was not with them, but that did not trouble them, for they thought that he would be with the other boys, and they never even looked for him. He never gave them any trouble, but was always there when they wanted him. So they journeyed on for a whole day, and only when it began to get dark and it was time to go to rest and sleep, they began to miss him. Where could he be? They looked carefully among the people and asked every one about him, but no one had seen him since they left Jerusalem.

Then poor Mary was terribly troubled. She could not think what had happened to her boy. Perhaps some evil had befallen him, and she would remember how wicked King Herod had tried to kill him when he was a baby.

Back she went to Jerusalem in great haste, and Joseph went with her. For three weary days they searched all through the town but could not find the boy. At last they wandered back to the temple hoping he might still be there, and there indeed they found him.

Jesus had been thinking a great deal about his Father's work, and wishing to know more about it, and in the temple there were wise men who could answer his questions and teach him many things.

So when Mary and Joseph found him, he was sitting among these learned men, listening to them and asking such wise questions that they were all astonished. They could scarcely believe that a boy only twelve years old could know so much.

Now Mary had almost forgotten that Jesus had been sent into the world to do a great work. She had almost forgotten that, though he was her child, he was God's Son too. She only thought how miserable she had been those three days when she had lost him, and how this was the first time he had ever made her unhappy.

Very sorrowfully she asked him why he had grieved her, why he had stayed behind and made her so anxious and troubled.

Jesus answered her very gently. He thought she would have known that he must think about God's work, and surely she should have looked for him first of all in his Father's house, for was he not God's Son?

Yes, he was Mary's Son but he was God's Son too. That she must never forget. But when he had gently reminded her of this, he obediently went home with her. It was not time yet to begin God's work in saving the world. So he helped her in the home and worked in the carpenter's shop as he had done before, waiting patiently till the time should come when he could begin the work which God had sent him to do.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

So the time came when Jesus was grown into a man, and must leave the home at Nazareth and begin his Father's work. His mother would miss him sorely in that little home, but she knew that there was much for him to do, and that all the people in the world needed his help.

Now the first thing that Jesus did when he left his home at Nazareth, was to go to the river Jordan to be baptized.

You know how little babies are baptized, do you not? Well, just as the water with which the minister or priest baptizes the little child, washes away anything that is not quite clean, so at the same time, though we cannot see it, the baby's little soul is washed white and clean and no marks of sin are left upon it.

The baptism of Jesus was different from this.

In those days there were many people coming to be baptized by one of God's servants called John. He was a very great and good man and he had spent his whole life trying to teach people about the King and to prepare them for his coming.

When the people were sorry for their sins and wanted to live better lives, he baptized them, to show that they were really sorry. The soul of Jesus was pure and white, and he had no sins to be sorry for, but he too went to be baptized with water.

When John saw Jesus standing by the river side, he knew at once that this was the King, God's own Son, whom he had been longing to see. It did not seem right that he, the humble servant, should baptize the Master, but Jesus told him that he wished it, and that was enough.

So John did as he was told and baptized Jesus just as he had done to poor people who were so sorry for their sins, and who wished to be washed clean.

But after the baptism of Jesus a strange thing happened. The gates of heaven opened and God's Holy Spirit came down like a dove and rested upon Jesus. And then a voice was heard from heaven, God's voice, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

So with this beautiful message from his Father, Jesus began his work. He knew how hard that work would be. He knew the pain and suffering he would have to bear. But he knew too that his Father was watching over him and would always help and comfort him.

CHAPTER IX

HOW JESUS WAS TEMPTED

It was not very long before Jesus came to a difficult part of his work. Do you know what temptation means? How, when you want a thing which you know you ought not to touch, something whispers in your heart, "Take it." Or when you have done something naughty the same voice will whisper sometimes, "Say you did not do it." That is temptation, the voice of the wicked spirit, the devil, who loves to make people do bad things and say what is not true. He tried his very best to tempt Jesus, just as he still tries to tempt you.

For forty long days Jesus was in the wilderness, a great wild lonely place where there was nothing to eat or drink and where there were only wild beasts prowling around.

And when Jesus was beginning to be very hungry, the devil, whose name is Satan, came to him and said: "If thou art really the Son of God, as thou sayest thou art, then thou canst do anything. Why then dost thou not turn these stones into bread?"

But Jesus knew that the devil wanted him to forget that he had a loving Father who was watching over him and who would give him bread all in good time, so he answered very wisely, and the devil was silent for a while.

Then Satan tried another plan. He took Jesus up to one of the highest points on the roof of the beautiful temple and said to him: "If thou art really the Son of God, prove it by throwing thyself down, for has not God written a promise that his angels will take care of thee, so that nothing can hurt thee?"

The devil thought that Jesus would certainly like to show that he was really God's Son. But Jesus was so sure that God was his Father, that he did not need to prove it or to try if the angels would take care of him, and he only said to Satan: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

But Satan thought he would try once more, so this time he led Jesus up into a very high mountain and showed him all the beautiful world lying below, all the splendid palaces, the riches and glory of it. It was the world Jesus had come to try to save, the people he wanted to help.

"All this belongs to me now," said the devil, "but I will give it to thee, if thou wilt only fall down and worship me."

But Jesus would not do what was wrong. He knew God's plan was best, and he said to Satan: "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve."

Then the devil saw that it was no use, that Jesus was stronger than he was, so he went away and left him.

Jesus must have been very weary then. It is always hard to fight against temptation. Then too he was hungry, for he had had nothing to eat for a very long time. But God had not forgotten him. As soon as Satan, the evil spirit, had gone away, the holy angels came down and brought him rest and comfort. There was no need now to turn stones into bread, for the angels brought him food and waited on him and gave him all that he wanted, just as his Father had promised they should do.

CHAPTER X

THE WATER TURNED INTO WINE

Do you remember how Satan said to Jesus that if he was the Son of God, he could do anything, even change stones into bread? This was quite true. God, who made the world and all the people and things in it, can do whatever he wills. So Jesus, the Son of God, when he was on earth could do wonderful things that no one else was able to do. He could make blind people see, he could make sick people well, he could even bring dead people back to life again. There was nothing that Jesus could not do. These wonderful things he did were called miracles, and now I will tell you about the first miracle Jesus did.

There were some people whom Jesus knew who were having a wedding feast, and Jesus and his friends, and his mother, were all invited to the supper. Jesus always liked to see people happy, so he went with the rest, but none of the other guests knew that a King was there.

Everything went happily for a while. The people feasted and made merry, but the servants began to look troubled and to whisper to one another, and Jesus's mother saw that something was wrong. She asked one of the servants what was the matter, and when she knew she came to Jesus and in a low voice told him that there was no more wine and the guests were waiting for it, and if they could not get any the whole feast would be spoiled. Mary felt sure that somehow Jesus would know what to do and that he would certainly help. So she told the troubled servants who stood near that whatever Jesus ordered them to do they must do it at once.

Close to where they stood there were six great stone jars in which water was kept. Jesus pointed to them and said, "Fill the water-pots with water," and the servants quickly filled them up to the brim with clear, cold water. Then when this was done Jesus told them to draw the water out and carry it to the guests.

But as the servants did this, how surprised and delighted they were to find it was wine now that came out of the jars and not water at all. They took it to the chief man who sat at the head of the table, and he asked at once why they had not brought this good wine to him at the beginning of the feast, instead of keeping it until the end. He did not know that Jesus had turned the water into wine, but the servants knew, and they wondered who this man could be who had power to do such a wonderful thing.

That same wonderful power it is that still makes the grape vine grow, and the little green sour grapes swell into the great sweet purple bunches, that are pressed out to make wine. It is God's mighty power that makes the little seed planted in the earth grow into a beautiful flower, so we too may still see miracles, if we look for them, every day.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHOOSING OF THE TWELVE FRIENDS

As Jesus went about from village to village, teaching the people about God, there were many who listened to him, and he began to choose some men to be his friends and companions. He wished to teach these men many things which they would never forget, so that afterward they might teach other people.

Jesus did not choose great and learned men to be his followers. He did not mind if they were simple and poor, for he could see deep down into men's hearts and knew who were loving and kind, true and faithful, and able to help him in his work.

One day, when he was walking by the seaside, a great crowd of people began to gather round him. They wanted to hear more of the wonderful kind words he spoke, and so they pressed closer and closer to him, until those at the back could not hear him speak at all.

When Jesus saw this he turned and looked out on to the lake, where there were some fishing-boats lying close to the shore. He beckoned to the fishermen who were washing their nets, and asked one of them to take him in the boat and push off a little way from the land. When the fisherman, whose name was Peter, had done this, Jesus sat there in the boat and spoke to the people who crowded down to the water's edge. Now they could all hear his kind gracious words, and they listened eagerly to all he said.

Then when he had finished teaching the people, he turned to Peter and told him to let down his net into the water and begin fishing.

Peter looked surprised when Jesus told him to do this. The time for catching fish was at night, and not in the daytime, and besides they had been fishing all night and not a single fish had they caught. But Peter felt he must obey this wonderful teacher, and so he said: "Master, we have toiled all night and have caught nothing; nevertheless, when thou dost bid me, I will let down the net."

And when he had thrown the net into the sea, and with the help of his partner in another boat had begun to draw it in again, it was so full of fish that it almost broke. They called quickly to the other fishermen, who came at once to help them, and there were so many fish that they filled all the boats with more than they could hold.

Now when Peter saw this he knelt down at Jesus's feet, just as the shepherds and wise men had done, and worshiped him. And the other fishermen came, too, for they wished to serve this Master who they knew must be God's Son. They thought no more of their boats and their nets, their home and their friends. They left everything that they might be with Jesus. That was how four of Jesus's friends were chosen. Their names were Peter, Andrew, James, and John. There were eight other men chosen as well, and we call them the twelve apostles or messengers of Jesus. We use the word "Saint" before their names now to show what good men they were. They all loved and served their Master well and faithfully, all except one, called Judas, whom you will hear about later on. He listened to Satan's temptations and became an enemy of Jesus instead of a faithful friend.

CHAPTER XII

THE PROUD RICH MAN AND THE POOR SORROWFUL WOMAN

Very soon more and more people heard of the new teacher who had come, and they wondered who he was. There was a certain rich man, who thought he would like to see this teacher, and so he invited Jesus to supper at his house. Now this rich man was proud, and thought he was doing a very kind thing to ask a poor man like Jesus to come to supper. He did not really love Jesus, or he would have known that though he seemed like a poor man he was really a King.

So when Jesus came into the house the proud rich man did not trouble to come and meet him with a kiss of welcome. He did not even order the servants to pour cold water over Jesus's feet. He did nothing to honor him or make him comfortable.

But as supper was going on, some one came humbly stealing in at the open door to where Jesus sat. It was a poor woman whose name was Mary Magdalene. She was not a good woman. She had done many wrong things, and when people passed her they drew aside and would not touch her. They said, "She is a bad woman." Mary Magdalene knew herself how bad she had been. But ever since she had seen Jesus and listened to his words she was so very very sorry that she longed to be good again.

She was so sorry now, as she stood quietly behind Jesus, that the tears began to run down her cheeks, and to fall in great drops upon the feet of Jesus. When she saw this she stooped down quickly and wiped the tears away with her long hair. And with her face close to those dear feet she kissed them over and over again. She had brought with her an alabaster box filled with precious ointment, and she now broke the box and poured the sweet scent on Jesus's feet.

But the rich man was very angry when he saw her doing that.

"She is a bad woman," he thought. "How can Jesus allow such a woman to touch him? He cannot know how bad she is."

Jesus knew exactly what the rich man was thinking. He always knew what people thought in their hearts, even if they did not speak it out loud. So now he turned to the rich man and began to tell him a story.

He said: "There was once a man who lent money to two other men. To one man he lent five hundred pennies, and to the other only fifty pennies. Afterward when he knew how poor the men were, he said he would forgive them all that they owed him, and they need not pay back the money at all.

"Tell me, now," said Jesus, "which of the two men would love him most."

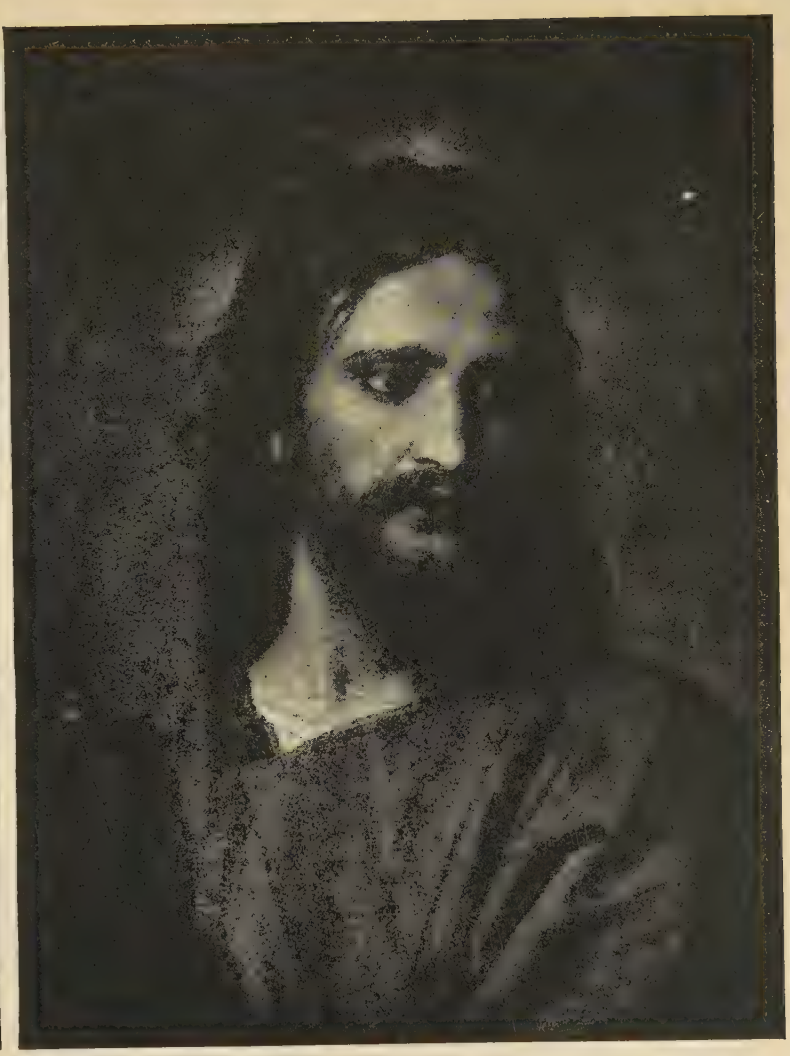
"I suppose the one who was forgiven most," said the rich man, wondering what Jesus meant by telling him that story.

"Thou art quite right," said Jesus, "and it is exactly like thee and this poor woman. She has much to be forgiven, and so she loves me much; thou thinkest thou art so good that thou hast nothing to be forgiven, and so thou lovest but little. When I came in, thou gavest me no kiss of welcome, but this woman has kissed my feet. Thou gavest me no water to cool my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Thou didst not pour ointment on my head, but she has poured precious ointment on my feet. So her sins which are many are forgiven because she loves me so much and is so sorry. But thou thinkest there is little for me to forgive and nothing for thee to be sorry for, because thou lovest me so little." Then Jesus turned to the woman and said, "Thy sins are forgiven."

The poor woman had loved Jesus before this, but she loved him more than ever now. He had

From the paintings by H. Hofmann.

AT TWELVE YEARS.



DURING HIS MINISTRY.

forgiven all the bad things she had done, and now she would always try to be good.

Jesus could not help the rich man; he only helps those who are very very sorry for the wrong things they have done, and for the good things they have left undone, and who love him with all their hearts.

CHAPTER XIII

THE STORM ON THE LAKE

Now the people in the villages and all the countryside began to talk a great deal about this wonderful teacher who spoke to them as never man had spoken before. It was said too that his touch made sick people well, so wherever he went they brought out those who were ill or suffering that he might take their pain away. Oh, how glad those poor sick people would be to see his kind face bending over them, to feel his tender touch and hear his gentle voice. And then how thankful they were when the pain and suffering left them at that touch, and they felt quite well and strong again. There were lame people who came to him, and he made them able to walk. There were poor blind men who lived always in the dark, and Jesus opened their eyes, and they could see the blue sky, the trees, and the flowers, and best of all, his face.

But Jesus did not make only men's bodies well. He saw that their souls needed his help too, that they might learn how to be good and true, kind and gentle. So he taught them many things and tried to make them understand how much God loved them.

When men thought of God they were afraid, because he seemed to them some one who was always angry with wicked people and ready to punish them. But Jesus taught them to think of God as a loving Father, and to call him in their prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven." Some day, if you have not already done so, you will learn the whole of that beautiful prayer, and many other words which Jesus spoke.

Now one day when Jesus had been teaching the crowds for a long time, he sent the people away and set sail in a fishing-boat to cross to the other side of the lake.

It was quite calm when the boat started, but it had gone only a little way when a great storm came sweeping down. The wind howled and the waves began to dash over the sides of the little boat until it was almost filled with water. The fishermen friends were with Jesus, and they were terribly frightened. But all the time Jesus lay fast asleep on a pillow in the back part of the boat.

At last the men felt so sure that they would all be lost that they came to Jesus and woke him up, crying, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"

Jesus arose at once and looked out on the wild waves and then at the frightened faces of his followers. He asked them why they were afraid when he was with them. Did they not know that surely he would take care of them? Then he turned again to the stormy waves and fierce blustering wind that was screaming round them, and said quietly, "Peace, be still."

The wind and the stormy waves knew the voice of their Master, and in a moment they grew still and quiet. The fierce wind died away, the waves sank back, and there was a great calm.

Never had the fishermen seen anything so strange, they could scarcely believe they were indeed safe and that Jesus by a word had quieted the terrible storm. And yet if they had but thought that he was the Son of God they would have known that everything must obey his voice. They need never have been frightened when Jesus was with them, for he always takes care of his children. No matter how the storm rages, no matter how frightening the dark wild night may look, when Jesus is close to us nothing can hurt us. Everything grows quiet at the sound of his voice when he says, "Peace, be still."

CHAPTER XIV

THE RULER'S LITTLE DAUGHTER

Later on when Jesus returned across the lake in the fishing-boat with his disciples, there was a crowd of people waiting on the shore to welcome him back. They needed him for so many things, and they were all eager for his return.

But there was one man who wanted Jesus more than all the rest. He was a rich man, a great ruler in the city, but he stood there in his fine clothes among all the poor people waiting for Jesus to come.

He had one little daughter, this rich man, and she was more precious to him than all his riches. One day she had fallen ill, and then she grew worse and worse, and the doctors could not make her better. They feared that she would die. Then the poor father remembered how he had heard of a wonderful man called Jesus, who could cure any one with a touch of his hand. People said this man was not far off, and indeed, was even now returning in a boat across the lake. So the ruler, whose name was Jairus, hurried down to the shore and waited there, eagerly watching the boat as it came nearer and nearer.

And the moment Jesus had landed and stood on the shore, the ruler ran to him and knelt down at his feet and begged for help. "My little daughter is so ill that we fear she will die," he cried. "Wilt thou come and lay thy hand upon her and make her well?" Jesus never turned away from any one who was sorrowful and needed his help. He bent down and gently raised the poor father to his feet and set out at once to go with him to his house, the crowd all following behind.

But before they had gone very far, a servant came to meet them and brought the sad news that the little girl was dead. It was no use bringing Jesus any farther, he said, for now it was too late.

Then Jesus turned quickly to the poor father and said, "Be not afraid, only trust me." And there was something in Jesus's face that comforted the ruler and gave him hope, and so they went on together.

At last they came to the ruler's house, but Jesus would not allow the people to follow him. He took in only three of his disciple friends.

Every one inside was weeping and making a great noise to show how sorry they were that the child was dead, but Jesus hushed them and told them to be quiet. "The little maid is not dead, she is asleep," he said.

This made the people very angry and scornful, for they knew she was dead. They did not know that what we call death God only calls a sleep, and that it was as easy for God's Son to bring the little girl back to life as it was for him to wake a child who had fallen asleep.

Then Jesus ordered them all to go out of the room, and only allowed the father and mother to stay behind with him and his disciples. The child lay there still and white on her little bed, and Jesus went and bent tenderly over her and took one of her little cold hands in his. "Little maid, I say unto thee, arise," he said. No, it was not too late, it is never too late for Jesus to help. Life came back to the child as she lay there, and presently she opened her eyes and sat up.

It seemed almost too good to be true; the father and mother could scarcely believe they had their child back again. But when Jesus quietly reminded them that they should give her something to eat, they began to feel sure that their little daughter was going to stay with them, and grow well and strong once more.

So Jesus passed on, leaving joy and gladness in that house which had lately been so full of sorrow.

CHAPTER XV

HOW JESUS FED THE HUNGRY PEOPLE

WHEREVER Jesus went now the people crowded out to meet him. The news of the wonderful things he did had spread round all the countryside. Mothers who had sick children brought their little ones to be made well. The blind people found their way to the roads by which he would pass, and cried to him to help them. The people who were so ill that they could not walk were carried out on their beds that Jesus might come near them and heal them.

But not only the sick and the sorrowful came in that crowd; many wanted to be near Jesus just to hear the wonderful words he spoke and to learn from him how to be good and happy.

Sometimes Jesus was very tired with all his work, and he would go away into some lonely place to rest among the hills, far away from any village or town. But even there the people would sometimes follow him if they knew where he was.

Now once it happened that Jesus had gone to a very lonely far-away place to rest for a while, and only his disciple friends were with him. But the people had guessed where he was going, and they walked a long, long way until they found him, up among the hills.

Jesus was never too tired to help any one who needed him, and when he saw these poor people he was very sorry for them. They had walked such a long way to find him, some of them had even carried sick friends who could not walk. There were women and little children among them too, all weary and footsore and hungry.

First of all, with his kind gentle touch Jesus healed the sick people, and then spoke comforting words to them all. But it was getting late, and it would soon be dark. The disciple friends began to wish that the people would go away.

"Master," they said to Jesus, "send the multitude away that they may go into the towns and country round about and buy food, and find lodgings, for we are here in a desert place."

But as Jesus looked at those poor tired faces and thought of the long walk they would have to take before they could reach any place where they could buy food, he said, "They need not go away, give them food to eat here."

The disciples looked at Jesus in great surprise. How could they feed all these people? Why, it would take hundreds of loaves of bread to give them each even a tiny piece.

"How many loaves have ye?" asked Jesus. Then one of the disciples answered: "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what is the use of these among so many people?"

He thought that Jesus would see how impossible it was to think of feeding the crowd. But he had not yet learned that his Master was the Son of God who made the corn to grow in the fields and gave every one bread to eat day by day.

It was a beautiful grassy place where the people stood listening to Jesus, and he told the disciples to make the people sit down in rows. The disciples did as they were told, wondering what would happen next.

Then Jesus took the loaf of bread from the boy who knelt before him, and he looked up to heaven and asked God to bless the bread. After that he broke it into pieces and gave it to the disciples to give to the people who were sitting around on the grass waiting. One by one Jesus took the five loaves and the two small fishes, but the more he gave away the more there was to give. His hands were never empty, and there was more than enough for every one.

Now when all the people had eaten as much as they wanted, Jesus told the disciples to pick up the pieces that had fallen on the grass, so that none of the bread might be wasted. And when they had done this, the pieces alone filled twelve large baskets.

How surprised that little boy must have been as he helped to pick up the pieces that were over. He had only given his five loaves and two small fishes. And yet when Jesus had held them in his hands they were enough to feed all that great crowd of people and leave twelve basketfuls over.

And the people too began to wonder how such a strange thing could have happened. They grew so excited that they wanted to take Jesus away and make him their King. But that was not God's plan, so Jesus quietly told them to leave him and go back to their homes. They did not know that he was a King already, a far greater King than any on earth, for he was the King of heaven.

CHAPTER XVI

THE HEALING OF THE TEN LEPERS

There was one terrible kind of sickness which Jesus was often asked to help, but which no one else could ever cure. This sickness was called leprosy, and the people who had it were called lepers.

No one would ever come near a leper or touch him. He was obliged to live apart from other people, and if he met any one in the road, he had to go aside out of the way and to cry, "Unclean, unclean."

So you can think how terrible this sickness was, and how miserable the poor people were who were lepers. But when Jesus came he brought hope even to these miserable people.

It was said that the great healer, who went about helping people, could cure even this terrible illness. And when the lepers heard that, they began to steal out and watch for his coming, wondering if such good news could really be true.

And one day as Jesus passed along on his way through a village, he saw ten of these poor lepers standing afar off, waiting and watching for him.

They knew this must be Jesus, and so instead of calling out the old sad words, "Unclean, unclean," a great pitiful cry burst from their lips, "Jesus, Master, help us."

Jesus was very sorry for these poor men, and he stopped at once to help them.

It was the law then that if a leper ever got well he should go to a priest, one of God's servants, and show himself so that people might be quite sure that the terrible illness was gone. Then he was allowed to live among other people again.

So when Jesus said to the lepers, "Go, show yourselves to the priest," they knew it meant that Jesus would make them well.

And as they went to find a priest, as Jesus bade them, the illness left them and they felt they were well and strong and clean again.

Would you not have thought that they would have come hurrying back to find Jesus and to thank him? Only one of these lepers did that, and he was a stranger, belonging to a different country. The other men went on, but this stranger turned back and never rested till he had found Jesus. There, with a heart full of gratitude, he knelt at Jesus's feet, with his head bowed down to the ground, and thanked the Master for what he had done for him.

"Were there not ten men healed?" asked Jesus, "but where are the nine?"

Ah! they had been very anxious to see Jesus, and had cried loudly for his help, but now that they were strong and well they forgot to thank him who had done this for them.

Then Jesus bent over the one grateful man who knelt at his feet, and bade him arise. The other men had strong and healthy bodies now, but this stranger had something far better as well—a grateful soul, made pure and strong by Jesus's touch.

CHAPTER XVII

THE STORY OF THE KIND STRANGER

Jesus had many things to teach the people in this world, and sometimes he taught them in the way that children loved best. He told them stories. But the stories he told were not just common stories. Each one of them had a special meaning and a special lesson hidden away inside it.

Have you ever seen a bee going from flower to flower gathering honey? It never stops to look at the beautiful colored petals. It goes straight into the heart of the flower and there it finds the honey deep inside. So it is with those stories, or parables as they are called, which Jesus told the people. They are like beautiful flowers, and hidden away at their heart is the precious lesson, which you must look for, as the bee looks for honey.

Now there were some clever people who did not care to listen to Jesus because they thought they knew more than he did. They were angry with him because he taught lessons they did not like, and because he could do wonderful things which they could not do. These men would come sometimes and ask Jesus difficult questions, always hoping that he would not be able to answer them, and so show that he was wrong and they were right.

One day one of these clever men came with a very difficult question. He asked Jesus what he should do, so that when he died he might go to heaven and live always with God.

Jesus told him at once that there were two things he must do. One was to love God with all his heart, and the other was to love and be kind to his neighbor.

"But who is my neighbor that I must love?" asked the man.

Then Jesus told this story to show the man who his neighbor was.

There was once a man who set out on a journey all by himself. It was a lonely road by which he had to travel, and it led through rough dangerous places where there were robbers lurking, ready to pounce down on any one who passed by.

So when the lonely traveler came along this road the robbers quickly spied him, and in a moment they rushed out and seized him. They took all his money away and even some of his clothes, and then they beat him and hurt him so badly that they half killed him. The cruel robbers did not care at all what became of the poor man they had robbed, but they left him there lying in the road too much hurt to move or to help himself.

Not very long afterward a priest, one of God's servants, came along the road, and saw the poor hurt man lying so helpless there.

But as soon as he caught sight of him, he quickly looked the other way and hurried past as fast as he could on the other side of the road. The robbers might be lurking close at hand, he thought, and if he stopped to help the man they might rob him too. No, it was much safer just to think of himself and leave the man alone. So he hurried on as fast as he could.

The poor traveler lay there just as the robbers had left him, suffering and unable to move, and by and by another man came in sight along the winding road. This was another of God's servants, but he, too, was afraid to stop and help the poor man. He did go over and look at him, but did not touch him, and decided that it was not his business to help hurt people who lay by the roadside. So he too hurried on, just as the priest had done.

Then some one else began to climb the mountain-road. It was a stranger who did not belong to that country at all. He was riding along on an ass, anxious, too, to pass quickly over this dangerous road. But when he saw the poor traveler lying there so still and helpless, he stopped at once. He did not care if the robbers were close at hand, he only thought that of course he must help the suffering man at once. Very gently he touched him, and bound up the hurt places, and did all he could to make the pain less. Then very tenderly he stooped down and lifted the poor man in his arms and carried him over to where the ass was standing, and placed him on its back.

So, carefully leading the ass over the rough road, he took the poor man to the nearest village where there was an inn for travelers. There he laid him on a bed and watched by his bedside all night. And when morning came and he was obliged to travel on, he told the people of the inn to take great care of the hurt man, and gave them money to pay for anything he might want.

"Now," said Jesus to the learned man who had tried to puzzle him, "which of those three men was neighbor to the poor hurt man?"

"The one who was kind to him and helped him," was of course the answer.

"Then," said Jesus, "learn to be as kind and helpful as he was."

Jesus meant to teach us that every one whom we can help is our neighbor, and that we must be kind and loving to every one. We cannot always do big things to help people as the kind stranger did, but there are always little things we can do every day, kind words we can say and even kind smiles we can give. So we shall little by little learn the lesson Jesus taught—that we are to love God and to love and help our neighbor too.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE STORY OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

The disciple friends of Jesus asked their Master one day how often they must forgive people who had hurt them or done them wrong. Was it not enough to forgive them seven times? Peter asked.

No, Jesus told them, that was not enough, they must go on forgiving without counting the times. Then seeing how surprised the disciples looked, Jesus told them a story to make them remember the lesson. He wished to teach them about forgiveness.

There was once a king whose servants owed him a great deal of money. There was one servant who owed him thousands of pounds. This was far more money than the servant was able to pay, so when he could not give back any of the money the king ordered him to be sold. And not only was the man to be sold, but his wife and his children too, so that the money should be paid back.

When the servant heard what the king had ordered, he went and fell down at the king's feet and begged him to wait a little.

"Lord," he said, "have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

Then when the king saw how sorry and unhappy the servant was, he forgave him, and told him he need not pay back any of the money.

But that same servant as he was going out met a fellow-servant who owed him a very little money. It was so very little compared to what he had owed the king, that it was scarcely worth remembering, but the cruel servant seized the other roughly and cried, "Pay me what thou owest me."

Then the fellow-servant fell on his knees and cried, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

But the cruel servant would not forgive him or wait for the money. Instead of that he had him shut up in prison and said that he should stay there until he had paid all the little money he owed.

Now when the other servants saw what was done, and how cruel and unforgiving this man was, they went and told the king all about it.

Then the king was very angry, and called that cruel servant and said to him: "O wicked servant, did I not forgive thee that large sum of money, and shouldst thou not have forgiven thy fellow-servant when he owed thee only a little money?"

And he ordered that the wicked servant should also be put into prison and kept there till he should pay all the money that he owed.

"So," said Jesus, when he had finished this story, "this is what God will do to you if ye are cruel and unforgiving."

God is like the king in the story. Every day there is so much for him to forgive—all the wrong things we do, and the angry words we say. We have only to tell him we are sorry and ask him to forgive us, and he always listens to our prayer. And yet how slow we are to forgive the people who have hurt us or done us any wrong. We are often very angry and want to hurt them back, instead of forgiving them.

So Jesus wished to teach us to remember that God cannot forgive us if we are like that cruel servant. We must be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Jesus's sake, has forgiven us.

CHAPTER XIX

THE STORY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Among the crowds that came to Jesus to listen to his words, there were bad people as well as those who were good. There were people who had been foolish, and who had done many wicked things, but they were often just the ones who loved him most because he understood how sorry they were and taught them how to be good.

Now some of the clever men you heard about, who thought themselves so much better and wiser than any one else, were very angry with Jesus because he made friends with these poor bad people. They said he should send such wicked people away and have nothing to do with them.

But Jesus only looked with sorrowful eyes at these men who thought themselves so good, and told them this story to try to teach them a lesson.

Out on the hills there was once a good kind shepherd who had a large flock of sheep and lambs to look after. He was a very careful shepherd, and each night when he led them home into the safe shelter of the fold he counted them one by one. This was to see if they were all there safely before he shut them up for the night. There were just a hundred sheep and lambs altogether, and he knew each one separately, so it was easy to count them.

But one night, when it was growing dark and he had led the flock home as usual and counted them as they entered the fold, he found there were only ninety-nine, and one was missing.

Where could the poor missing sheep be? The shepherd knew how dangerous it was for it to be wandering alone on the cold dark mountain-side. There were sharp thorn-bushes in which it might be caught, steep places down which it might fall. And worse than all, there were hungry wolves prowling about ready to snatch and carry off anything they could find.

The night was dark, and a fierce tempest began to rage, but the good shepherd could not rest while one of his sheep was in danger. Out into the wild night he went carrying a lantern in his hand to search for the missing sheep. He did not mind the storm, though the wind howled round him and the rain beat on his face. The cruel thorns pierced his feet, and his hands were torn by the briers, but still he searched on.

Then at last in the shelter of a rock he saw something white, and he gave a cry of joy, for he knew it was his lost sheep. There lay the poor silly sheep huddled up close against the stone. It had wandered off from the rest of the flock, thinking it could take care of itself, but now it was so weary and wet, so hungry and frightened that it could only lie there trembling, too weak to stand.

But the shepherd did not speak sharply to the foolish sheep. He knew just how tired and helpless it was. With tender gentle hands he lifted it and put it upon his shoulder, and carried it back over the rough steep mountain-side through the storm of rain and wind, until he brought it safely to the fold where it could rest warm and happy once more.

Then the shepherd went gladly home and told all his friends about the lost sheep, and said to them, "Be glad with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost."

This was the beautiful story that Jesus told, and in it was the lesson he wished to teach those proud men.

He wanted to show them that he was like that good shepherd, that he loved all his people as the shepherd loved his sheep, even those that were foolish and did many wrong things and wandered far away from all that was good and safe and right. Still he loved them, and always longed to bring them safely back. It did not matter how far they had wandered or how bad they had been. If only they were sorry and wanted to come back to him and be good he would help them, just as the shepherd carried home that poor tired-out sheep safely on his shoulders.

And then in the same way as the shepherd's friends were glad with him when the sheep was safe, so the angels in heaven would be glad when Jesus helped one of his poor sinful people to be good, and brought him safely home at last.

CHAPTER XX

THE STORY OF THE WASTEFUL SON

After Jesus had told the people the story of the good shepherd, he went on to tell them another story with another lesson in it. This was the story of the prodigal or wasteful son.

The story began about a man who had two sons. The man had a great deal of money and many servants, and the sons had everything they could want, so they ought to have been very happy. The eldest son was good and contented and helped his father, but the younger son was quite different. He didn't like work at all, and never wanted to do as he was told, and was as discontented as he could be. How nice it would be, he thought, to have plenty of money of his own that he could spend just as he liked. He wished, too, that he could go away from home where there would be nobody to tell him what he ought to do.

So one day he went to his father and said to him: "Father, give me my share of money which I should have when thou art dead. I do not want to wait for it, I want it at once."

The father felt very sorrowful when he heard these words, but he said nothing, and gave his son the money he had asked for.

Now as soon as the son knew that he had money to spend, he made up his mind to leave home at once and go far away into another country where he could enjoy himself and do exactly as he liked.

At first, while his money lasted, everything went well. There were many people ready to make friends with him, and he had splendid feasts and all sorts of pleasures every day. Whenever he saw anything he wanted he bought it, and, indeed, he did just exactly as he liked.

But this did not last very long. Very soon the money was all spent, for he had wasted it sadly. Then there were no more pleasures and no more feasts, and all the people who had pretended to be his friends left him. He was now so poor that he had no money even to buy dry bread. He tried to work, but the only work he could find was to go out into the fields to take care of the pigs. There, as he sat watching the pigs eating the dry shells of beans, he was so hungry that he wished he could share their food. And nobody gave him even a piece of bread.

Then the boy began to see how foolish and wicked he had been. He thought of his kind old father who had never been harsh to him. He thought of the comfortable home where he had been so well cared for. Why, even the servants in his father's house were much better off now than he was. They always had plenty of food to eat and good warm clothes to wear.

He looked down at his rags and at his thin, toil-worn hands, and he said to himself: "I will go back to my father and I will tell him how sorry I am, and ask him if he will let me be a servant in his house, for I am not fit to be called a son."

So he set out on the long journey home, and he was very tired and footsore, and so dusty and ragged that he looked like a beggar.

At last he came within sight of home, and he thought no one would know him, but his father saw him coming a long way off. He had often looked out along that road hoping that his boy would come back, and the moment he saw that poor tired dusty-looking figure he knew at once that it was his son. He did not wait for the boy to come and tell him how sorry he was. Hurrying quickly out he ran to meet him before he could reach the house. The son felt almost ashamed to look up, but the father put his arms round him and kissed him and held him close.

Then the son sobbed out all that he had meant to say.

"O father," he cried, "I am so very very sorry. I have been such a bad son to thee. I have wasted all thy money and done so many foolish wicked things that I am not fit to be called thy son."

But the father never spoke one word of blame, he only held him closer and told him how glad he was to welcome him home again.

Then he led the tired ragged boy into the house, and told the servants to bring the best and richest clothes for him, and to make ready a splendid feast of welcome. "For this is the son I had lost," he said, "but now I have found him again."

There is a beautiful meaning in this story, for Jesus meant to show us that God was like that kind forgiving father. Even when his children are bad and ungrateful and forget all about him, still he waits patiently on. He never stops loving them and hoping that some day they will be sorry and come home to him. And when they are really sorry he forgives them and welcomes them, just as the kind patient father in the story welcomed his son as soon as he came to say how sorry and ashamed he was.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

There was another story which Jesus told the people at that time. It was a story to teach us that God listens to the prayers of those who are sorry they have done wrong and ask his forgiveness, but that he cannot listen to people who think themselves too good to need his help.

Two men, Jesus said, went up one day into the beautiful temple to pray to God. One was a rich man, dressed in splendid robes, one of those learned great men called Pharisees. The other was a very poor, very humble man, who seemed almost ashamed to come into the beautiful temple. He was one of those men called publicans, who were not very good men.

The rich Pharisee walked in first. He held his head high and had a proud haughty look, for he thought there was no one quite as good as he was. There he stood where every one could see him as he began his prayer. "Lord," he said, "I thank thee I am so much better than other men."

He did not think he had anything to be sorry for, he did not want God's help. He only went on telling God all the good things that he did every day.

But the poor man, the publican, stood far off in a place where no one would notice him. He felt as if he scarcely dared to come into God's house at all. His head was bent down, and he would not even look up to heaven as he began his prayer to God. It was not a long prayer, such as the Pharisee had prayed. The only words that the poor sinful man said were, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

But God heard that sorrowful prayer. The kind Father in heaven listened to that poor sinful man. And because he was so sorry God forgave him all the bad things he had done and sent him away happy and good.

The rich learned Pharisee went out of the temple too, but he did not carry away God's pardon and a happy heart. He had asked for nothing, so God gave him nothing, and thus he missed the great gift of pardon and happiness which God had given to the poor man.

CHAPTER XXII

HOW JESUS LOVED LITTLE CHILDREN

When people have a great deal of work to do and are very busy, they do not always care to have little children near them. They have no time to talk to them or play with them, and so the children are told to run away and not be troublesome.

But though Jesus had so much to do that he was often very tired, he never sent little children away from him. However weary he was he loved to have them near him, to feel their little arms round his neck, and to listen to all they had to say.

It was no wonder that children loved to come to Jesus. He was so kind and gentle and understood so quickly. The very touch of his dear hands made them feel how much he loved them.

There was one day when Jesus was very tired with all the work he had had to do, and the disciple friends were hoping that he would rest. But just then a little crowd of people came toward them from the village close by. Some of the women had heard that Jesus was there, and they had brought their children out hoping that he might perhaps put his hands on the little heads and bless them. They had heard that he loved children and was kind to them.

But the disciple friends were angry when they saw the little ones. Their dear Master was tired and ought not to be troubled with a crowd of tiresome children.

"Take them away at once," they said to the mothers, "our Master is weary, and the children would only tire him."

But Jesus held out his hands to the little ones and drew them close to him. He was not pleased with the disciples for trying to send them away. "Suffer the little children to come unto me," he said, and the children gladly came at the sound of that kind voice, and he lifted the babies in his arms, while the bigger children stood close around his knees. Very gently he put his hands on the little heads, one by one, and blessed them, while they, looking up into his kind face, loved him with all their hearts.

How good it must have been to be so near Jesus, to hear his voice and feel his touch. What happy children those were who could look into his face and feel his arms around them. But though we cannot, like them, see him with our eyes, we know that he loves little children now just as much as he did then.

"There's a Friend for little children
Above the bright blue sky,
A Friend who never changeth,
Whose love can never die."

Jesus is always near us, and sees us though we cannot see him. It makes him glad when children love him and try to please him, and those words he spoke of the children long ago he speaks to all to-day: "Suffer little children to come unto me."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LITTLE HOME AT BETHANY

Jesus, as he went about teaching and helping people, seldom knew where he would rest at night, for he had no home. Just as when he was a little baby, he had no splendid palace, but was born in a poor stable and laid on a bed of hay, so all through his life he was always poor though he was a King. He knew, just as poor people know, what it meant to be hungry and homeless.

Even the birds, watched over and cared for by God, had warm little nests to shelter in. The foxes on the hillside had holes into which they could creep and keep cozy and warm. But Jesus, the King of heaven, God's own dear Son, had nowhere to rest his head.

There was one little home that Jesus loved to visit. It was in the village of Bethany, not very far from the great city of Jerusalem. Two sisters, whose names were Mary and Martha, lived there with their brother Lazarus.

The brother and sisters loved Jesus dearly, and it was a happy day for them when he climbed up the steep road that led to the little village, and came to their house to rest. There was always a welcome waiting for him, and loving hands ready to serve him.

The two sisters were not at all alike though they both loved Jesus so very much. Mary was quiet and thoughtful and loved to sit at the Master's feet and listen to his words. Martha was a very busy person who seldom sat still, but bustled about anxious to make everything comfortable for Jesus. She would bring cool water to bathe his tired feet, and make ready the best food for the Master's meal. She so dearly loved to do things for him.

Now once when Jesus was resting in the little home, Martha was busy as usual preparing the food, very anxious to make him comfortable. There was a great deal to do, and she needed Mary's help. It vexed her to see her sister sitting listening to Jesus. It was idle, she thought, to sit there and not help with the work.

So Martha came to Jesus and said to him, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me."

But Jesus knew how much Mary loved him, and that to listen to his words was even better than serving. So he answered Martha gently and told her that Mary's way was best. He did not mean to blame Martha for being so anxious and busy, but he wanted to show her that to listen to his words and try to learn the lessons he taught pleased him best of all.

That was a very happy little home at Bethany until one sad day when the brother Lazarus fell ill. Jesus was far away at the time, but the sisters sent a messenger to him as quickly as they could, to tell him how ill their brother was. They did not ask Jesus to come at once, they only sent the message, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." They thought they did not need to ask him if he would come and heal their brother. They knew that Jesus loved him and would surely help.

But Jesus did not start at once for Bethany.

He waited two whole days before he set out. The disciples did not want him to go at all, for Bethany was close to Jerusalem, and in Jerusalem there were cruel men who hated Jesus. Not very long ago these men had tried to stone him and kill him, and the disciples did not think it safe to go back.

But Jesus was not afraid. He knew his Father would take care of him, and so he prepared to go to help the poor sorrowful sisters.

Then, as they journeyed along, Jesus said to his disciples, "Lazarus is asleep, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."

The disciples had forgotten about the ruler's little daughter, and how Jesus had said she was only asleep when she was dead. So they answered him now: "But, Master, if he is asleep it will do him good, and it would not be a good thing to awake him." So then Jesus told them plainly that Lazarus was dead.

Yes, indeed, Lazarus had died four days ago, and already they had put away his body into a rocky cave and buried it out of sight.

The two sisters sat in the lonely sad home weeping together. Presently the neighbors came in to try to comfort them, and they sat weeping there too. Then a whisper went round that Jesus had been seen coming up the road to the village. The whisper reached Martha's ear, and she raised her tear-stained face and went quickly out of the house to meet him.

And when she saw him, and met his kind, loving look, she cried out in bitter sorrow the thought that had been hurting her all along: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

Jesus answered her quietly, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha knew that all people who died would one day rise again and live forever, and she thought that was what Jesus meant. But again Jesus told her that he could make all things alive because he was God's Son. Martha answered humbly that she did indeed know that he was God's Son and could do anything. Then she hurried quickly back to the house and whispered to her sister, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

As soon as Mary heard that Jesus was near she too went quickly out to meet him. The neighbors, who thought she had gone to weep at her brother's grave, followed her to try to comfort her.

But Mary had gone to the one place where she knew comfort was to be found. Down at Jesus's feet she knelt, and, like Martha, she could only sob out the one sorrowful thought, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." They had looked so anxiously hour by hour for Jesus to come. They had felt so sure that he would help them, and now at last when he had come it was too late.

It made Jesus very sorrowful to see her there kneeling at his feet, crying as if her heart would break. And though he knew he would soon be able to make her glad, it grieved him to see her sadness, and he wept too.

Now when the neighbors saw the tears in Jesus's eyes, they said to one another: "See how he must have loved Lazarus. Why, then, did he not come sooner and make him well, as he has healed so many sick people."

Then Jesus asked where they had laid the body of Lazarus, and they led him to the cave where Lazarus was buried.

There was a great stone in front of the cave, and Jesus told them to roll it away. Every one wondered what he meant to do, but they did as he bade them, and then stood waiting to see what would happen.

Then Jesus stood in front of the cave, and, looking up to heaven, he spoke aloud to his Father. "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me," he said. He wanted all the people to know that God, who was his Father, always listened to him and helped him. Then with a loud voice he cried out, "Lazarus, come forth."

How eagerly the people looked on, how breathlessly they waited. Did it really mean that his voice could call the dead man back to life?

Yes, surely, for there at the opening of the cave stood Lazarus, alive and well, just as if he had been wakened from a sleep.

What a happy little home that was once more! And if Mary and Martha had loved Jesus before, how much more they loved and trusted him now. They were surer than ever that he was indeed God's Son, the King of heaven, who had power to do whatever he willed.

Many of the neighbors too began to believe that this was truly the Son of God, and the news of the wonderful miracle was carried far and wide.

But the people who hated Jesus, and could not bear to hear him called God's Son, or a King, were more angry than ever when they heard how he had brought Lazarus back to life. They made up their minds that they must get rid of him, and so they began to make their wicked plans as to how they might seize him and put him to death.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BLIND MAN WHO CRIED TO JESUS

THINK how sad it must be to be blind, never to see the sunshine or the flowers, but always to live in the dark. How the poor blind people must have longed for Jesus to come near them and heal them! How eagerly they must have listened day by day for the sound of his footsteps!

There was one blind man, named Bartimæus, who had heard a great deal about Jesus, and felt sure that if only he could come to him, Jesus would make his eyes well.

This poor blind man was not able to do any work. The only thing he could do was to sit at the roadside and beg kind people who passed by to give him a little money.

And one day as he sat as usual by the side of the road that led to the busy city, he heard the tramp of many feet coming along. What could such a crowd mean? He put out his hand and caught at the cloak of the first passer-by and asked eagerly: "What is the meaning of all that noise? Is there a great crowd coming along the road?"

"Jesus of Nazareth is passing by this way," was the answer.

Jesus, the great teacher, the man who could heal the sick, and make blind people see! Oh, if only this Jesus would stop for a moment as he passed, and help him too.

The blind man could not go to him, he could not grope his way in that crowd. There was only one thing he could do, and so he cried out as loudly as he could, "O Jesus, help me!"

The people who were hurrying past were angry with this beggar who was crying out so loudly. They spoke roughly to him and told him to be quiet and not try to stop Jesus and trouble him. But the blind man took no notice of their harsh words. He did not care what the people said to him, if only he could cry loud enough to make Jesus hear him. So again the cry rose, louder even and more anxious than before, "O Jesus, help me!" And through all the noise of the crowd and the sound of many feet, Jesus heard that pitiful cry, and stopped.

"Bring the poor man to me," he said. There were many hands ready to lead the blind man to Jesus, and the people near him spoke kindly to him now, and said, "Do not be afraid, Jesus is calling you."

In a moment the blind man was on his feet. He threw aside his cloak that he might move more quickly, and so they led him trembling to where Jesus stood.

He was a little frightened perhaps with the noise of that great crowd, and could not tell where he was, as the people led him forward. But as soon as he heard Jesus's voice he was afraid no longer. Never in all his life had he heard such a kind, gentle voice before.

"What dost thou wish that I should do for thee?" said the voice.

The blind man answered at once, "Lord, that I may be able to see."

It was the one thing he wanted, the one thing he felt so sure that Jesus would do, that he would lead him out of darkness into the light.

"Because thou hast trusted to me to help thee, I have opened thine eyes," said the voice again.

Yes, the darkness was gone. There were the golden sunshine and the blue sky. There were the fair green trees and distant purple hills. There close to him were the eager faces of the crowd. But best, far best of all, there was the face of Jesus looking so kindly, so pityingly at him.

The crowd began to move on, with Jesus in the midst of them, but the man who had been blind did not go back to the roadside to beg. He too followed after Jesus, thanking God with his whole heart, and feeling that all he wanted now was to keep close to the side of his Master.

CHAPTER XXV

THE LITTLE MAN WHO TRIED TO SEE JESUS

There was another man, that same day, who was longing very greatly to see Jesus. He was not a poor man like Bartimæus, and did not need Jesus as the blind man had done, for he was strong and well. But still he wanted to see Jesus very much indeed. He had heard of all the wonderful things that the great teacher had done, and had heard too some of his wonderful words.

Now this man, whose name was Zacchæus, was not a very good man. People said he took money which did not belong to him and did other wrong things too. He was such a very little man that his head only reached the shoulders of other men, and in a crowd he never could see anything.

And now Jesus was to pass by, and of course there would be a crowd around him. Zacchæus was sure of that, but somehow or other he was determined that he would see the great teacher. He wondered how it would be possible to do this, and then suddenly he thought of a very good plan.

There were tall trees growing along the side of the road along which Jesus would pass. The branches stretched across the pathway, and if he could climb into one of these trees, and sit on one of the branches, then he could look down and see Jesus plainly as he passed.

So the little man climbed quickly into one of the trees and waited for Jesus to come. How eagerly he looked down from among the branches, and when the sound of many feet came nearer and nearer, how anxiously he bent over to catch the first glimpse of the wonderful teacher. The crowd began to pass below the tree, and Zacchæus was glad to think he was safely above them. He would have seen nothing in such a throng. Then suddenly in the midst of the crowd he caught sight of the Master. He had no thoughts then to spare for the busy throng or his own safety, he could only think of Jesus.

Very earnestly Zacchæus looked at that kind, kingly face, and as he looked it made him wish that he was a better man. Somehow the very sight of Jesus made him sorry for all the bad things he had ever done.

He was quite hidden by the thick green leaves, he thought, and he never dreamed that Jesus would look up and see him. But Jesus knew he was there. He knew how anxious the little man had been to see him, and how sorry he was now, and how he longed to be good.

So, looking up into the tree, Jesus said: "Zacchæus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must stay in thy house." Zacchæus came climbing down the tree as quickly as he could. It seemed too good to be true that the great teacher had not only spoken to him but was coming home with him. Very humbly he led Jesus to his house, and there he welcomed him most joyfully.

There were people in the crowd who were angry with Jesus for going to that little man's house.

"He is not a good man," they said.

But that is just why Jesus had gone. It was to help bad people to be good that he had come from heaven.

And Zacchæus never forgot the day when he climbed into the tree and first saw Jesus's face. He never forgot the kind words Jesus spoke to him, and he tried to be good and do no more wrong things, that he might be fit to be a friend of Jesus.

CHAPTER XXVI

HOW JESUS RODE INTO JERUSALEM

When the time came round for the great service, called the Passover, to be held in the temple at Jerusalem, Jesus set out as usual to go to it. He had gone every year, ever since he was a boy of twelve.

The disciples had done their best to persuade Jesus to stay away this year. They were afraid of all those learned men who were at Jerusalem who hated their Master and had already tried to kill him. But Jesus would not try to escape any of the pain and suffering that was waiting for him, for he knew that it was part of God's plan.

So they all set out together to go to the great city. But before they reached Jerusalem Jesus stopped and told his disciples to go into a village close by. There, he told them, they would find an ass tied up, and they were to unloose it and bring it to him. Perhaps the man to whom the ass belonged would ask them why they were taking it away, but they were just to say that Jesus needed it.

So the disciple friends went, as Jesus bade them, and they found the ass in the village. It was a very young ass, and no one had ever yet ridden on it. Just as they were unloosing it the owner came and asked them what they meant by doing so. But when they told him that Jesus needed it, he at once allowed them to lead it away.

Then the disciples spread some of their clothes on the ass's back to make a comfortable seat for Jesus to sit on, and so he rode on toward the great city.

But great crowds had begun to gather round Jesus as he went. The people from the city came out to meet him and ran before him crying out that the King was coming. Some of them took off their cloaks and spread them on the road to make a carpet for Jesus to pass over. Others cut down branches from the trees and laid them along the way to make a pleasant green path before him. And all the while the cry grew louder and louder: "The King is coming! the King whom God has sent. Hosanna in the highest!" Every minute the crowd grew larger, till it seemed as if every one in the city had come out to do him honor. It was like a royal welcome.

The children came running out too to greet Jesus, and they went in front singing praises to the King. It seemed as if the people had at last found out that Jesus was indeed a King, the Son of God.

How glad and proud the disciples were! They thought that now at last their Master would have all the riches and honor of an earthly king. But Jesus knew better. He did not want an earthly kingdom, for his kingdom was in heaven. These people who to-day called him their King would shout a different cry to-morrow.

Ah, yes, the friends of Jesus thought he was riding into the city to be made a great king, but he knew that he was going there to suffer and to meet his death.

"Ride on, ride on in majesty;
In lowly pomp ride on to die."

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"Hosanna in the highest."—*Matt.* xxi. 8, 9.

"Crucify him."—*Luke* xxiii. 21.

CHRIST TRIUMPHANT AND CHRIST REJECTED.

FROM THE PAINTINGS BY J. J. TISSOT.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ENEMIES OF JESUS

THE enemies of Jesus were more angry than ever when they saw how the people welcomed him. They hated to hear him called a king. They were angry even with the little children who loved him. Like the wicked King Herod long ago, they wished that they could kill him.

But it was difficult to do him harm when all the people crowded round him. These men were afraid that the crowd would not allow them to take Jesus, and so they had to try to think of some other plan. Every day they hated him the more as he went about teaching the people, healing those that were sick, with his kind, loving touch, and telling his wonderful lesson-stories.

How those cruel men longed to stop him. But how could they find a way? Ah, it is sad indeed to think of the way they found. It was one of Jesus's own disciple friends who showed those enemies an easy way to take him.

The name of that disciple was Judas. He must have been a good and kind man once, when Jesus chose him for a friend. But he had one fault that grew bigger and bigger till it left no room in his heart for kindness and goodness. He loved money better than anything, even better than his Master.

So when those enemies of Jesus sent for Judas and said to him, "If thou wilt show us how we can secretly seize thy Master we will give thee thirty pieces of silver," Judas answered that he would take the money and show them a way. Oh, how pitiful it was to think that any one who had been Jesus's friend could do such a thing as this! Of all the sad things in the world that have ever happened this was the saddest. Jesus might expect his enemies to try to hurt him, but who would have thought that a friend could have wished to do him harm!

Jesus knew that his enemies were watching him and that very soon they would take him, and that he would no longer be able to help and teach the people. There were so many lessons he longed to teach these poor people before he left them, so he never rested now, but taught them all day long. His beautiful words and the stories he told are all in the Bible, where you may read them. For the words he spoke were meant for us just as much as for the crowds who listened to him then.

And still his enemies waited on, hoping that Judas would soon come and tell them where they could find Jesus when he was alone, with no one to help him.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE STORY OF THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH VIRGINS

ONE of the stories which Jesus told the people at that time was the story of the wise and the foolish virgins.

There were ten virgins or young maidens who started out together one evening to welcome home a bride and bridegroom. They set out merrily with their lighted lamps, dressed in all their gay wedding garments. For when the bridegroom came they would go in with him to the great wedding feast which was prepared in the house.

The night began to grow very dark, the maidens grew very tired of watching for the coming of the bridal party. At last their tired eyes could keep awake no longer, and as they sat by the roadside they fell fast asleep.

Suddenly while they were sleeping, a cry sounded close by, "The bridegroom is coming, go ye out to meet him."

In a moment the maidens were all wide awake, and they started up to go to meet the bride and bridegroom. But while they had slept their lamps had burned very low, and they were obliged to wait and trim the wicks to make them burn more brightly.

Now five of these virgins were wise maidens, and had filled their lamps full of oil to last a long time, in case the bridegroom was late in coming. So now, when the wicks were trimmed, the lamps burned as brightly as ever.

But the other five virgins were foolish and thoughtless. They had thought the bridegroom would be sure to come soon, and they had not troubled to fill their lamps full of oil.

And now when they wanted the light so badly their lamps began to flicker and go out, for the wicks were dry.

Then these foolish virgins turned to the wise maidens and said, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are gone out."

But the wise maidens shook their heads, and said they could not do that. "If we give you our oil there will not be enough for our own lamps," they said. "It will be better if ye go and buy oil for yourselves."

So the foolish virgins hurried off to find some one who would sell them oil for their lamps. And while they were gone the bridegroom came.

Then the five maidens with their shining lamps joined the gay bridal party, and they all went together into the house where the wedding feast was waiting. And when they had all entered in, the door was shut.

Not very long afterward the foolish virgins came hurrying back. Their lamps were lighted now, and they were ready to welcome the bridegroom. But when they came to the house, they found the door was shut.

Inside they could hear the sound of merry voices and feasting, and the maidens knocked and knocked. But no one heard them.

"Lord, Lord, open to us," they cried.

And at last the voice of the bridegroom answered them, saying, "I do not know you."

They had not been ready to meet him, they must be strangers. So now they could not come in. They were too late, they could only turn, weeping, away.

There is a lesson in this story, as there always is in the stories Jesus told.

He bids us remember that some day he will come again, and we must be ready to welcome him as those wise maidens welcomed the bridegroom. If we love Jesus and ask his Holy Spirit, day by day, to help us to serve him, our lives will be like lights in the world, every one will know that we belong to him, and he will call us his friends when he comes.

But if we are like the foolish maidens and forget to ask him to help us to be good, the light will die out and we shall not be ready to meet him.

"Jesus bids us shine
With a pure clear light,
Like a little candle
Burning in the night;
In the world is darkness,
So we must shine—
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

"Jesus bids us shine,
First of all for him:
Well he sees and knows it,
If our lights grow dim;
He looks down from heaven
To see us shine—
You in your small corner,
And I in mine."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE STORY OF THE TALENTS

THEN Jesus went on to tell the people another story, and this was the story of the talents.

There was once a great lord who set out on a journey to a far-away country. But before he started he called all his servants together to tell them what they should do while he was away. Each of the servants was to have a share of his money to use in the best possible way he could.

To one servant the lord gave five shares or talents. To another servant his lord gave two shares or talents, and to another servant his lord gave one share or talent.

Then the master set off on his journey and left them. Now the servant who had received five talents was very wise and careful. He took the money and began to trade with it. That is to say, he bought something that cost a very little money, like wood, and out of it made other things, like chairs and tables, which he could sell for a great deal of money. So before long he had ten talents, instead of five, ready to give to his master.

The servant who had two talents did just the same. He bought with his two talents something of which he could make useful things, and these he sold for four talents.

But the servant who had only one talent was idle and foolish. Instead of buying things with the money, and then trying to make more money, he went and digged a hole in the ground and hid his lord's talent. And there the money lay, idle and useless, all the time that his master was away.

After a while the lord of those servants came back. He called the men together and asked them what they had done, and how they had used his money.

Then the first servant who had traded so wisely came and said: "Lord, thou didst give me five talents, see now I have gained five talents more, and I have ten talents to give thee."

Then his lord said to him: "Well done, thou good servant. Thou hast shown that I can trust thee. Thou hast done so well with the little money I gave thee, that now I will trust thee with much more. Thou shalt share all the riches and happiness that belong to thy lord."

After that the second servant came, and he showed his lord how he had gained two more talents. And to him too his lord said "Well done," and promised him a share of his riches.

But the servant who had hidden the one talent was not glad to see his lord. He was sullen and angry because he knew he had done wrong, and so he began to make excuses for his idleness.

"I thought thou wert a strict, stern man," he said, "so I was afraid to spend the money, and I hid it and never used it at all."

Then his lord was very angry, and told him he was an idle, bad servant. And because he could not be trusted to use his master's money, the one talent was taken away from him and given to the wise servant who already had ten talents.

Do you see the lesson hidden away in this story? It is God who is the great Master, and we are all his servants. He gives to each of us different gifts or talents, things which we can use. To some he gives clever hands that can work well, to some clever heads that can learn quickly. Every one has some special gift from God which is to be used for him. And some day he will come and ask us how we have used his gifts.

Then if we have done our very best, if we have tried to work hard and grow better and wiser and have used our gift to help other people too, then, like the wise and careful servants, we too shall hear our Lord's voice saying: "Well done, thou good servant. Thou hast shown that I can trust thee on earth, come now and share with me the joys of heaven."

CHAPTER XXX

THE LAST SUPPER

Just as there was a special service held in the beautiful temple, so at that time a special feast or supper was eaten by every one in his own house. It was not just a common supper, but was held to remind people of a special time when God had helped them. No matter how poor a person was, he always had this thanksgiving supper.

The disciples did not know where they could make the supper ready for Jesus and for themselves. They had no home to go to, not even a room where they could sit down and eat. But Jesus told them where they would find a room, and told them also that the owner of the room would gladly lend it. So they went, as Jesus told them, and when they found the room they prepared the thanksgiving supper.

When the evening shadows began to fall, Jesus and his twelve disciples all went to eat the supper together. Even Judas was there, for he still pretended to be a friend, and the other disciples did not guess that he was planning to help those cruel men to take Jesus. But Jesus knew, for he could see into Judas's heart and read all his thoughts.

Now as the disciples were sitting down to supper they began to quarrel about where they should sit. They all wanted the best places, each one wanted to be first and have his own way.

It was the custom then that all the guests at supper should first of all have their feet washed as well as their hands, to cool and refresh them. But the disciples were not going to do this. It was a servant's work, they thought, so no one moved to get the water, even to wash their Master's tired feet.

It grieved Jesus to see them so selfish, thinking only of themselves. Very quietly he rose from the table and took a towel, poured the cool clean water into a basin, and kneeling down began to wash the disciples' feet himself.

Oh, how sorry and ashamed they felt then! To think that their King and Master should do the work of a servant and wash their feet! But Jesus quietly went on, for he wished to teach them a lesson.

Then when it was done he looked at them gravely, and said: "Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." That was the lesson he wanted us all to learn, that we are always to try to serve one another. A selfish person who thinks only of himself and wants always to have the best things, and thinks himself too good to help and serve other people, can never be counted a friend of Jesus. Jesus our King showed us how he could do the humblest servant's work, that we might learn to be like him.

So the washing of the feet being finished, they all sat down at the table. Jesus then took the bread and blessed it and broke it and gave each of his disciples a piece. Then he took the cup of wine in his hand and blessed it and gave it to his disciples to drink. The bread and wine were his body and blood, he said, and afterward they were to do as he had done in remembrance of him. Do you remember how Jesus fed the great crowd of people with five loaves and two small fishes? That was very wonderful, but this was more wonderful still. For he not only gave them the bread and wine, but he gave them himself as well. Some day you will understand what a wonderful gift this was, for he still gives this precious gift to us, when we take the bread and wine as he told us to do in remembrance of him. So he taught them what they should do when he was gone.

Then as he sat and looked at the faces of those twelve men whom he had chosen to be his friends, he grew very sad to think that one of them was now an enemy and wished to do him harm.

"There is one of you," he said to them, "one of you, my own disciple friends, who is going to help my enemies to take me."

Oh, how guilty Judas must have felt when Jesus said that! Surely he was ashamed when Jesus looked so sorrowfully at him. Even now it was not too late, he might tell Jesus how wicked he had been but how sorry he was. Jesus would have forgiven him and helped him to be good again.

But Satan was there tempting Judas and reminding him of the pieces of silver which had been promised him. So at last when Jesus told him to do what he meant to do quickly, he got up and went out into the dark night. He left his kind loving Master and went to those cruel men, out from the light and sweetness of Jesus's presence into the dark night, to do his wicked work.

Then Jesus turned to the other disciples and began to talk to them. He loved these friends so dearly, just as he loves each one of us his children, and he longed that they should learn more and more how to be good and kind and true. He knew he was soon going to leave them, and there would be no one else to teach them.

"Little children," he said, just as a mother talks to the little ones she loves so well. "Little children, there is a new rule I want to give you. Love one another. Just as I have loved you, learn to love one another. In a little while I shall have to leave you, but every one will know that ye belong to me if ye are gentle and loving to one another."

Peter could not bear to think that his Master was going away from them, and he asked him quickly, "Lord, where is it that thou art going?"

Jesus answered: "I am going to a place where thou canst not follow me just now, Peter, but some day thou too wilt come."

Peter said to him: "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."

Poor Peter, he felt so brave and so sure of himself. He knew that the enemies of Jesus wanted to kill him, and if Jesus meant that he was going to die, Peter was quite ready to die with him.

But Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself.

"Wilt thou indeed lay down thy life for my sake?" he asked. "Before very long thou wilt be afraid to say thou art my friend, and before the cock crows twice thou wilt have said three times that thou dost not even know me."

How sorry Peter must have been when Jesus spoke these words. He could not believe that he would be such a coward, he thought that nothing would ever make him leave his dear Master. All the other disciples were sad too as they listened to what Jesus said. What could he mean by saying he was going to leave them? What would they do if Jesus went away?

And Jesus, seeing how sorrowful they were, tried to comfort them. He told them that he was going back to his Father in heaven, and that there he would prepare a place for each of them. Then when their work on earth was done they would come too and he would be there to welcome them. And then he went on to say that though he went away and they could not see him, he would always be near to help and comfort them.

And that is the promise he gives to each one of us, even little children. There is nothing a little child need fear, for Jesus is always close at hand and always ready to help if we ask him.

So when Jesus had finished speaking the comforting words to his disciples, they sang a hymn together and went out.

CHAPTER XXXI

JESUS IN THE GARDEN

Not very far outside the gates of Jerusalem there was a garden on the slope of a hill. It was a place where Jesus often went to rest, and there under the silver olive-trees he could be alone and pray to his Father. The disciples knew that Jesus loved to go to that garden, and Judas knew it too.

It was to this peaceful quiet garden that Jesus went after that last supper. The night was dark, and the disciples were very tired and ready to stretch themselves on the grass and sleep. But Jesus could not sleep. His heart was too full of sorrow, and he needed his Father's help. He took only three of the disciple friends with him into the garden, the three perhaps that he loved best, Peter, James, and John. Then he bade them watch while he went on a little farther to pray.

Jesus knew that his enemies would soon have their own way, that they would make him suffer pain and put him to a cruel death. But it was not that that made him so sorrowful. He was too brave to be afraid of pain or even death. No, there was something far worse that Jesus feared, and that was sin. All the wrong and wicked things that people had done, all the bad things we do now, Jesus was going to take them all upon himself and suffer in our stead.

One little sin will often make us very unhappy. Then how unhappy Jesus must have been when he had to bear the sins of the whole world.

So he knelt and prayed God to help him through all the suffering, and God sent an angel to strengthen and comfort him.

Jesus had told his disciples to watch and pray and not to sleep. But they were so very tired that each time Jesus went back to them he found them sleeping. They woke up ashamed when they heard their Master's voice asking the first time, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" But when he left them again their heavy eyelids began to droop over their tired eyes, and although they tried their best to keep awake they were soon fast asleep once more. So Jesus found them when he returned again, and once more he bade them watch and pray. But when he came back the third time he told them that now they might sleep on and need not try to watch any longer, for his enemies were close at hand.

Even as he spoke there was a rustling among the trees and the sound of the tramp of many feet coming nearer and nearer.

The disciples were wide awake now, and they gathered close round their Master, trembling and afraid. Yes, there were the enemies of Jesus come to take him. There was a company of soldiers, and servants with sticks and swords, and there too among them was Judas.

In a moment Judas had come hurrying straight to where Jesus stood. "Hail, Master!" he said, and kissed him. This was what he had promised to do to show the soldiers which was Jesus.

Then the soldiers rushed forward to seize Jesus, but they could not take him against his will. The King stood there looking steadily at them, and when they met that look they all went backward and fell to the ground.

Jesus asked them then, "Whom seek ye?"

"We seek Jesus of Nazareth," they answered.

"I am he," said Jesus; "if ye want only me, then let my friends go."

For even then he thought of those friends he loved so well.

Peter, however, could not bear to see his Master made a prisoner. He started forward, and drawing his sword he cut off the ear of one of the men. But Jesus did not need Peter's sword. He could have had an army of shining angels to fight for him if he had wanted help. He told Peter to put his sword away, and then, with his ever kind and gentle touch, he healed the man who had been hurt.

Then the soldiers bound Jesus and led him away back to Jerusalem, where the rest of his enemies were waiting for him.

CHAPTER XXXII

HOW PETER PRETENDED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW HIS MASTER

JESUS was quite alone when the soldiers took him a prisoner back to Jerusalem. Not one of his disciple friends were with him. They had all left him, for they were too frightened to go with Jesus. Not one of them was brave enough to say, "He is my Friend and Master, I will go with him."

Where then was Peter who was so sure that he was ready to die with Jesus? Peter was as frightened as the rest. He did not run away and hide, but he and another disciple followed a long way off, hoping that no one would notice them.

When the soldiers reached Jerusalem they took Jesus to the palace of one of his enemies, and Peter managed to pass in too.

It was a cold night, and there was a fire burning in the court. The servants gathered round the fire talking about the prisoner whom the soldiers had brought, and wondering what would be done to him. Peter wanted to hear what they said, so he came near the fire too, and began to warm himself and to listen. But as he stood there one of the maid-servants looked earnestly at him and said, "This man was with Jesus, he must be a friend of his." All Peter's courage left him.

"I don't even know him," he answered quickly.

With beating, frightened heart, Peter left the fire, and went outside the door into the porch, but there another servant saw him and called to the others, saying, "This fellow was also in the garden with Jesus of Nazareth."

And again Peter answered angrily, "I do not know the man."

But it was no use; the servants were sure this was one of Jesus's followers, and they said again, "We are certain thou art one of his friends."

Peter became more frightened and angry every minute, and he said very loud and furiously, "I do not even know Jesus."

And just then in the quiet of the early dawn Peter heard the sound of a cock crowing.

In a moment he remembered those words which Jesus had spoken: "Before the cock crows twice thou wilt have said three times that thou dost not even know me."

There was a stir inside just then, and Peter looked quickly up. They were bringing Jesus through the hall. Peter's Master had heard him say so loud and angrily, "I do not even know Jesus," had heard too the sound of the cock crowing.

But Jesus said not a word. He only turned and looked at Peter.

But oh! how sorry that look made Peter feel, sorrier than he had ever felt in all his life before. To think that he had pretended not to know his kind, gentle Master, the best Friend he ever had. He was so ashamed and sorry that he went out and wept bitterly. He did truly love Jesus, although he had been so false and cowardly. And Jesus knew that Peter really loved him and was truly sorry, and so he forgave him. But I do not think Peter ever forgave himself, or forgot to be sorry for what he had done. Only that sorrowful, forgiving look helped him to be brave and true all the rest of his life, and to love Jesus even more than he had done before.

CHAPTER XXXIII

HOW THE WICKED MEN TREATED THEIR KING

ALL that long night Jesus waited until his enemies should make up their minds what they would do with him. He stood there like a lamb among wild beasts, for the people who hated him were fierce and cruel as wolves.

When the morning came they took Jesus to a judge called Pontius Pilate, and asked him to decide what they should do with this prisoner.

Now Pilate felt sure that Jesus had done nothing wrong, and he wanted to set him free. But that made the people very angry, and they shouted out, "He must die!"

"Why, what wrong has he done?" asked Pilate.

"He says he is a King," cried his enemies.

Then Pilate turned to Jesus, who stood so quietly and patiently there before him. "Art thou indeed a King?" he asked.

And Jesus answered, "Yes, I am a King."

Then the people shouted even louder, throwing up their arms and pointing at Jesus. "Crucify him! crucify him!" they cried.

That cry meant that they wanted Jesus to be nailed to a cross of wood and there left to die. It was the way that very wicked people were punished, and was the most shameful and cruel death. Yet that is what they wished should be done to this kind gentle Jesus who had always gone about among them to do them good and to help them.

Oh, how sorrowful Jesus was as he stood there so patiently while the angry people stormed and shouted below. He had done them no harm, and yet they hated him so sorely.

Pilate, watching Jesus, felt more and more certain that he did not deserve to be punished at all. But he thought it would satisfy the people if he gave his soldiers orders to beat Jesus and then let him go.

So the rough soldiers took Jesus and began to beat him with knotted ropes and to mock him.

He had said he was a King; well, they would pretend he was one. They threw a gay-colored robe round his shoulders, and plaited a wreath of thorns and set it on his head instead of a crown. The sharp thorns pierced his forehead, but sharper than the thorns was the pain that pierced his heart to think that these men could be so cruel.

"Look at the King!" they cried.

It was all a game, they thought, to pretend that he was a King. Oh, if only they had known that he was indeed the King of heaven!

Then again Pilate took Jesus out to the people, and asked them if he might set him free. But the people cried even louder than before, "Crucify him! crucify him!"

"Would ye have me crucify your King?" asked Pilate.

"He is not our King; we will not have him for our King!" cried those wicked men.

Then Pilate saw it was no use to try to save Jesus, and because he was a coward and was afraid of the people, he said, "Take him then, and crucify him yourselves."

So those wicked men got their own way at last. Jesus was to die. The Son of God was ready to carry out his Father's plan.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE CROSS OF JESUS

VERY quickly those wicked men led Jesus away to a hill outside the city, and there they nailed their King to a cross of wood. Those kind hands, which with their gentle touch had healed the sick so often, had made blind people able to see, and had blessed little children, were fastened each with a nail to the cross. Those tired feet, which had never rested while people needed help, had another nail driven through them. And so Jesus was lifted up on the cross to die.

Was he angry, do you think, with those cruel men who hurt him so? Oh, no, Jesus loved even his enemies, and when he hung there upon the cross he prayed to God and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It makes us very, very sad to think of Jesus then, and to remember that it was for us that he suffered all that pain.

> "There is a green hill far away,
> Without a city wall,
> Where the dear Lord was crucified,
> Who died to save us all.
> He died that we might be forgiven,
> He died to make us good,
> That we might go at last to heaven,
> Saved by his precious blood."

There were very few friends near Jesus then, but his mother and John stood close beneath the cross.

His mother had the saddest heart of all. She had loved him so dearly ever since she held him, a little baby, safe in her arms. She knew that this must be part of God's plan, but she wept tears of bitter sorrow as she stood there. Very tenderly Jesus spoke to her. In the midst of all his pain he still thought of other people and tried to comfort them.

He knew how these two would miss him, his dear mother and the disciple whom he loved perhaps best of all. So now he told John to take the weeping mother home and be like a son to her, while he gave the beloved disciple unto Mary's charge asking her to be a mother to him.

There were two other crosses set up, one on each side of Jesus, and on these crosses hung two thieves. At first both these thieves joined in the mocking cries of the people who watched Jesus. But by and by one of them grew silent. He knew that he deserved to die, for he had lived a wicked life, but when he looked at Jesus he felt sure that this man did not deserve to be nailed to a cross. Who was this Jesus who hung so patiently there? What words were those written above his head? "This is the King of the Jews." What if this was really a King? The poor thief listened quietly. He heard that prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Surely this must indeed be God's Son, the King of heaven. Was it too late to ask for his help?

"Lord," he cried, "remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

And the answer came quickly from the cross where Jesus hung: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

No, it is never too late to seek the help of Jesus. Even the dying thief learned that.

At last it was all finished. Jesus was dead, and his enemies could hurt him no more. Only his friends came and took his dead body away and laid it in a rocky grave in a garden. Then they rolled a great stone against the entrance of the cave and sorrowfully went away.

CHAPTER XXXV

HOW JESUS ROSE AGAIN

The body of Jesus lay quietly in the tomb among the flowers of the garden. His enemies were glad to think that he was dead, but they were not quite satisfied yet. Jesus had once told them that even if they killed him, he would rise again alive in three days. They were afraid his disciples might come and steal away his body and pretend he was alive. So they set a company of soldiers to keep watch round the tomb, and to guard it that no one should roll the heavy stone away.

But very early on the morning of the third day, while the soldiers were keeping their watch, a strange and frightening thing happened. Suddenly the earth began to shake, heaven's gates were opened, and an angel came down and rolled away the great stone from the door of the tomb.

The angel's face was so bright and shining that the eyes of the soldiers were blinded as they looked. They could only hide their faces, crouching on the ground, trembling with fear. Then they turned and fled back to the city and told those wicked men what had happened. "Jesus is alive again," they said; "the tomb is empty, and an angel has come down and rolled away the stone."

But the wicked men persuaded the soldiers to keep all this a secret. They bade them pretend that they had fallen asleep, and that when they were asleep the friends of Jesus had come and stolen away his body.

It did not matter what the soldiers said. Jesus was alive again, and very soon his friends would know the glad news.

It was some women who came first to the tomb that early morning. They came to bring sweet herbs and spices to put on the body of Jesus. But as they came they remembered the great stone that was in front of the tomb, and they wondered how they could roll it away.

It was still dark, and the faint morning light was only just beginning to dawn, so they were getting close to the tomb before they noticed that the stone was rolled away already. Some one must have been there before them. They hurried on, and bending down they looked in, then started back in fear and surprise. The tomb was empty; the body of Jesus no longer lay there.

One of these women who had come so early was Mary Magdalene, that same Mary who had washed Jesus's feet and wiped them with her hair, she who had loved him so greatly. As soon as she saw the empty tomb she turned and ran back to the city to tell the disciples of Jesus that some one had taken his body away.

The other women stood there looking sadly into the empty tomb and wondering where the body of Jesus could be. Suddenly, as they looked, they saw a shining angel sitting there, with robes as white as the glistening snow. The women were almost as frightened as the soldiers had been, and they too fell to the ground and hid their faces. But the angel spoke comforting words to them, and asked them why they were looking for Jesus's body when he was alive. "He is not here," said the angel. "He is risen, as he said."

Many glad messages had the angels brought to earth, but this perhaps was the gladdest message of all. The women's hearts were filled with joy. Jesus, their dear Master, was alive again; he had risen from the tomb. They must go quickly and tell all his friends the glad news. So leaving the empty tomb and the shining angel, they turned and hurried back to find his disciples.

The next people who came to the garden were the two disciples Peter and John. As soon as

Mary had brought the news that Jesus's body was no longer in the tomb, they ran as quickly as they could to see for themselves, and Mary followed after them. Yes, it was exactly as she had said. The stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty. What could it mean? Was Jesus really alive again? They would go and find the other disciples and tell them what had happened.

But Mary could not leave the place. She stayed behind in the garden, and when they were gone she crept close to the empty tomb, and there sat down and wept. She still thought that some one had stolen away her dear Master's body, and she could not bear the thought.

Once again she stooped down and looked into the tomb, and this time she saw it was not empty, for two shining angels sat there.

Mary was not frightened or surprised; she could think of only one thing, her dear Lord's body was no longer there.

"Woman, why weepest thou?" asked the angels kindly, and Mary answered at once, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

Just then she turned to see who was standing close behind her, for some one there was asking her the same question.

"Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?"

It was Jesus, the risen King, who stood there and spoke to her, but Mary did not know him. There was no longer any look of pain or sorrow or tiredness in his face, and that made him look different. Then, too, perhaps Mary's eyes were dim with weeping and she could not see very plainly.

She only saw a man standing there, and she thought he must be the gardener come to tend the flowers in the garden, so she said to him, "Sir, if thou hast taken him away, tell me where thou hast laid him."

Then very quietly Jesus said to her, "Mary."

Ah, she knew that voice at once, and in a moment she knew his face too. It was her Lord himself speaking to her.

"Master!" she cried, as she knelt at his feet. She was too joyful to find other words; she only gave that one cry, "Master!"

CHAPTER XXXVI

HOW JESUS SHOWED HIMSELF TO HIS FRIENDS

At Christmas time, when we keep the birthday of Jesus, it is cold, bleak winter with snow and ice, but when Easter comes, the day when he rose again, it is bright, happy springtime. Even the flowers remind us that Jesus is alive again. They too were hidden in the dark earth, but now they spring up into life again in all their beauty. The bare branches of the trees that looked so dead put out little living green shoots to show they are alive. It is the time of the resurrection or coming to life again.

It was in the afternoon of that first Easter day that two of Jesus's friends were walking sadly along a country road, talking together. They did not notice the spring flowers or the song of the birds. They were so very, very sorrowful. They thought that Jesus was dead and that they would never see him on earth again.

But as they walked slowly along, a stranger came and walked by their side, and asked them kindly why they were so sad. "Surely," they answered, "thou hast heard what has just happened? Wicked men have taken Jesus and killed him. We are his friends, and we thought he was a King and that God had sent him to make the world good. But now he is dead, and we are all alone."

The stranger listened to their sorrowful words, and then he began to talk to them. He told them it was all part of God's good plan; that unless Jesus had died he could not have saved people from punishment. He was indeed a King, but his kingdom was in heaven.

The friends listened and began to understand. But they wanted to hear more. Just then they reached their home, and the stranger seemed as if he would go on and leave them.

"Stay with us," the friends both cried together. "It is nearly evening. Come in and rest."

So the stranger went in, and in the cool of the evening, when the light was growing dim, they sat down together to supper.

Then the stranger took the bread that was on the table, and broke it, and gave it to the two friends. And suddenly, as he did this, they knew that it was Jesus. But even as they stretched out their hands to him, too joyful to speak, he was gone, and they were alone.

"How was it that we did not know him?" they asked one another. "No one but our Master could have spoken such comforting words."

There was only one thing to be done, so they set off at once for the city to tell the disciples that they had seen Jesus.

The disciples were sitting together that night in a room with locked door. They were still afraid of those wicked men. But they opened the door at once when the friends knocked and asked to be let in.

The newcomers had no need to tell their tale. Before they could even begin, the joyful cry of the disciples reached their ears: "The Lord is risen, and has shown himself to Peter!" Yes, they too had heard the glad news, but they gathered round the two friends, eager to hear their story as well.

And suddenly, while they were listening, they looked up, and there they saw Jesus standing quite close to them.

For a moment they were terrified. They could not believe it was really Jesus.

"Why are ye so frightened?" said Jesus to them, in the gentle voice they knew so well. "It is really I, your Master."

Then he showed them the marks that the cruel nails had made in his hands and feet, and they knew this was indeed their King who had been nailed to the cross.

Can you think how happy they were as Jesus sat down to supper with them, just as he used to do? All the sorrow and pain were over now. There were no more tears, only such gladness as they had never felt before.

But one of the disciples, whose name was Thomas, was not there that night, and when the other disciples said to him, "We have seen Jesus," he would not believe them. "How could it be Jesus?" he asked. "Jesus was dead. He had been nailed to the cross. Unless I see the marks of the nails in his hands and feet, and touch those marks, I will not believe," he said.

But Jesus knew what Thomas was thinking. And so one night, when the disciples were all together in that room with the locked door, he came and stood in the midst of them again. "Peace be unto you," he said. Then he stretched out his hands toward Thomas to show him the marks of those cruel nails.

"Thomas," he said, "see here are the marks in my hands. Put out your finger and touch them."

But Thomas had no need to do that. He saw Jesus's face, he heard his voice. It was indeed his own dear Master.

"My Lord and my God!" he cried.

Jesus said to him: "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed. It is far better to believe without seeing."

The next time Jesus came to his disciples was in the early morning by the seashore. The fishermen disciples had taken their boat again and gone out fishing. All night they had been working hard, but not a single fish had they caught.

Then when the dawn began to break they turned their boat homeward and came wearily toward the land.

There, on the shore, close to the water, Jesus was waiting for them, but they did not know that it was Jesus.

He called to them as they came near, "Have ye caught any fish?"

They answered, "No."

Then Jesus said to them, "Try once more on the right side of the boat."

And when they had let down their nets again, they caught so many fish that they could scarcely draw the nets up.

Then John, the special friend of Jesus, guessed who it was, and whispered to Peter, "It is the Lord."

The moment Peter heard that, he jumped into the water to go at once to Jesus. He could not sit still in the boat, he must reach the shore first.

There indeed stood their dear Master, and a meal was spread there, all ready for the tired, hungry fishermen. Jesus always took such loving care of his disciple friends. A fire was burning there too, and so they brought some of the fish they had caught and cooked it. Then, with their Master close beside them, they all sat down to breakfast together.

CHAPTER XXXVII

HOW THE KING WENT BACK TO HEAVEN

Jesus had finished his Father's work on earth, and now the angels were waiting to welcome him back to heaven.

Yet for many days he waited still on earth, teaching those disciple friends he loved so well, and showing the people who loved him that their King was indeed alive.

But the day of parting came at length. The disciples were in Jerusalem when Jesus came to them that last time. Together they all left the city and went along the quiet country road they knew so well. They had so often climbed that hill together to the little village of Bethany.

And there on the lonely hillside the disciple friends knelt at Jesus's feet, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And as he blessed them, he was carried up into heaven and a bright cloud hid him from their sight.

The King had gone back once more to sit on his throne at his Father's right hand. The shining angels had opened the golden gates, and all heaven rang with songs of triumph to welcome back the King.

But there on earth the little band of men still knelt, gazing up into the sky. Their Master had gone from them and they were left alone. He had told them that though they could not see him he would always be near them, but for a moment they forgot that.

Then suddenly, as they still looked so wistfully up into the sky, two angels stood beside them.

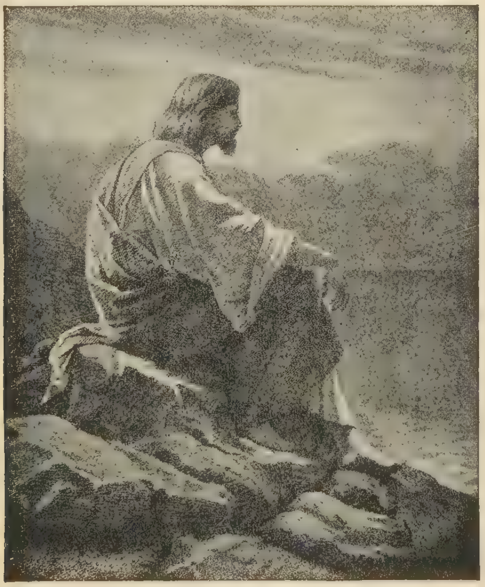
"Why do you stand here looking upward so sorrowfully?" the angels asked. "Jesus has gone back to heaven, but some day he will come again, just as ye have seen him go."

Yes, some day the King will come back to us again. Not as he came the first time, a little child born in a poor stable, but as the great King of heaven. And even now, although we cannot see him, he sees us, and loves us, and takes care of us. There, in heaven where he has gone, he is making ready a place for each of his children who love him and try to serve him.

"And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love;
For that child, so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.

"Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see him, but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high."

Yes, we shall all see him, that kind, loving Jesus, who came to live and suffer on earth, that we might live with him forever in heaven.



THE SOLITUDE OF JESUS.

". . . He departed thence by ship into a desert place apart."—Matt. xiv. 13.

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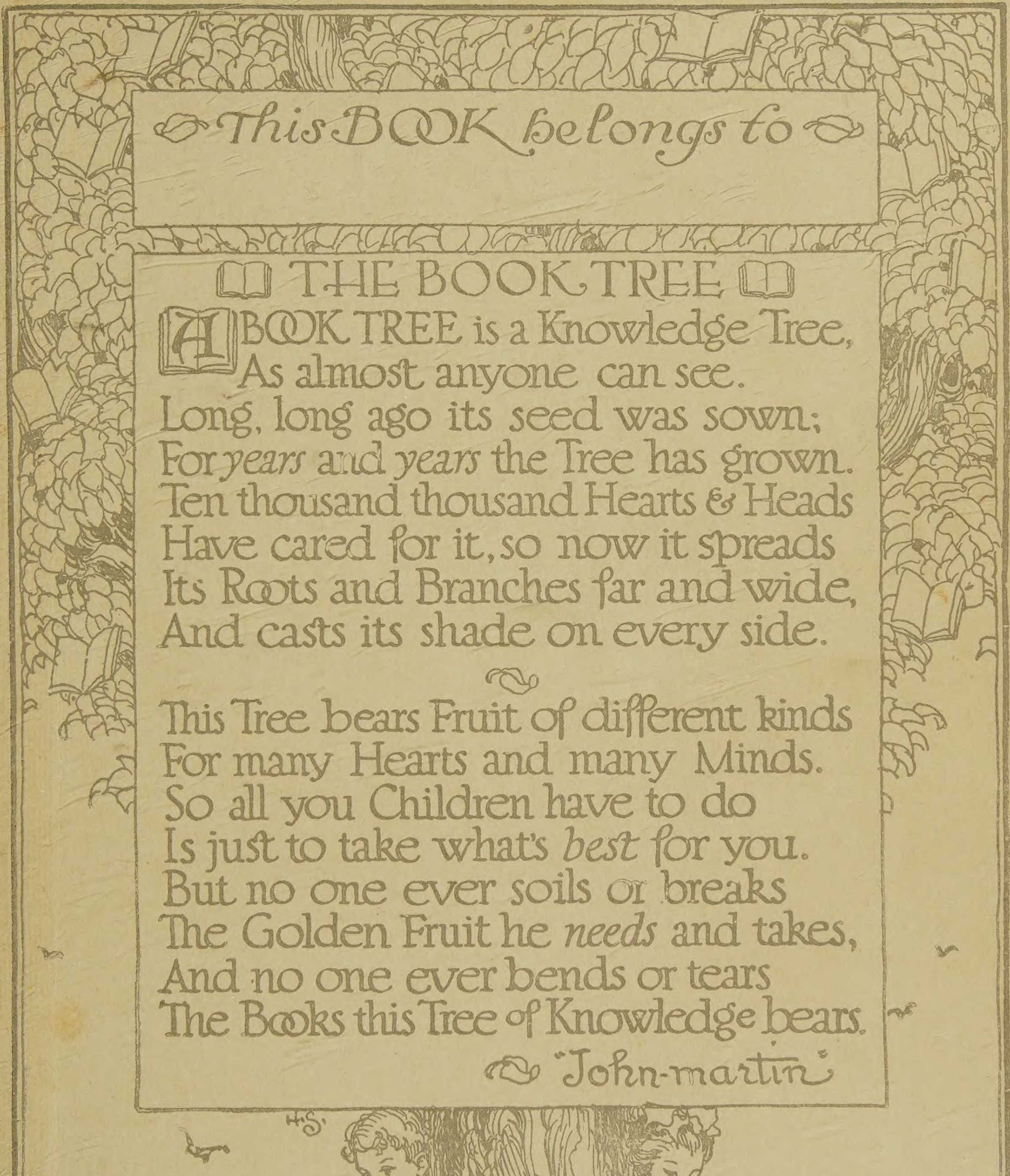

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